

88
CHILDREN'S
SERMONS

for
ALL OCCASIONS



GEORGE ROBERTS

P. M. Watson

88 CHILDREN'S SERMONS
For All Occasions

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Children's Sermons

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By

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NEW YORK

CHICAGO

Fleming H. Revell Company

LONDON

AND

EDINBURGH

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FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 851 Cass Street
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 99 George Street

To
the children
who listened to
these sermons
so patiently

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INTRODUCTION

ELEMENTS OF THE CHILDREN'S SERMON

ALL the sermons in this book have been preached in the First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest, Illinois, and many of them also in several other places. They are here slightly condensed from the form in which they were delivered. The children's sermon has a recognized place in our order of worship of Sunday morning, and never exceeds six minutes in length—five minutes is preferable. They are now being published, not with the expectation that children will read them, or that parents will use them in the homes, but with the hope that other ministers, who know the care and time needed to prepare a little sermon each Sunday, may derive some benefit from them, as the author is indebted to so many other similar volumes.

Only the preacher himself knows that, brief though the result of his labours will (and should) be, the preparation of a children's sermon is a thing not "to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly." Two elements enter in to strengthen this opinion: First, we are literally, far more so than in the "long sermon," planting a seed of living truth in an immortal soul which is all prepared to receive it. Second, the very brevity of the ser-

mon adds to the need of its preparation; "it will take a long while to make it short."

Of course a children's sermon should consist of a story, or anything akin to a story, that holds the child's interest, and which leads up to a moral. Oftentimes a story has to be rejected because it leads to nothing of value. For every children's sermon should contain, explicitly or implicitly, a moral, but the moral should not be too blatantly evident. It should never be introduced with a "this teaches us," nor be in any way so tacked on that the very nails which hold it are evident, as was the method of Æsop, who otherwise preached very excellent children's sermons. A single sentence, unannounced, may often at one and the same time complete the story and teach the lesson.

Still oftener may the moral be contained in the very story itself; in which case it should be left right there and not be referred to in any way, shape or manner. Do not fear that it will escape your hearers. It will not; their minds are too keen. Best of all is it when the lesson can be conveyed in the form of a single question which naturally follows from the story. There is no ending so effective as a simple and searching question.

One rock on which ministers often stumble when preaching to children is remembering the others who are in the congregation. The most effective sermon to children in no single word or tone of

voice betrays interest in any one but the children. The wise preacher to children will let enter by one ear and promptly depart by the other such familiar comments as, "You know that we older people profit as much by your sermons to the children as do the children themselves—perhaps more so." Not to dismiss such flattery is to "cramp one's style" in causing one to keep the adults unconsciously in mind when preparing the sermon. And so to do is unavoidably to fail to reach the children.

One other point is essential. It is one that is equally true as to any and all sermons, but most so as to those to children; and perhaps here it is oftenest found wanting. This is, that there must be but one point to the sermon. Hold back every blow of the hammer that is not aimed to hit that one and particular nail. Eliminate all else that threatens to do more. For example, would you teach a lesson from the snow? Then refer to its whiteness, *or* its softness, *or* its something else; but do not use more than one of these in any single sermon.

No acknowledgment of indebtedness can be given in this book, as the stories are drawn literally from everywhere; advertisements, newspaper items, ephemeral and classical literature, mythology and legend, and personal experiences of myself and friends.

SERMONS FOR ALL SUNDAYS

I

RESTRAINT

WHEN we wish to tie up or restrain an animal we have different ways of doing it according to what animal it is we wish to restrain or tie up. And we fasten our rope to different parts of their bodies according to which animal we are tying. Shakespeare wrote: "Horses are tied by the heads, dogs and bears by the neck, monkeys by the loins, and men by the legs." ("Men by the legs" refers to the former custom of putting men in the stocks, a picture of which you can see in many of the history books of the early life in our country.) And Shakespeare might have made a longer list and added that bulls are fastened by a ring in the nose, elephants by a chain around their feet, and a hippopotamus is occasionally fastened by a whole harness that goes around both his large neck and his larger body. Very young children are sometimes restrained by a rope around their waist, so that mother will not have to be watching them all the time, and they may be kept from falling down stairs or getting into some other form of danger. In fact in all these cases the restraint is in order to keep the animal from getting into mischief or from doing harm to others.

How are you restrained? When we ask this we

are not thinking of ropes or chains, for you are too old for those. Yet you still need restraint, to keep you from saying unkind or naughty words, from doing wrong things, and from thinking impure thoughts. The greatest restraining power you can have for these necessary and difficult tasks is Prayer. Prayer reminds us that we ought not to say, and do, and think such things; and it brings God into our lives to help us not to say, and do, and think such things. Thus Prayer keeps us from getting into danger and from doing wrong.

2

WEIGHTS

D ID you ever see a man run a race with something heavy, a weight, tied on his shoulders or carried in his hand? Of course you did not. You see him not take anything on but lay much off. If it is an informal race he throws off his coat and hat; if it is a more important race he changes his clothes and dons the lightest suit there is. Naturally he does this that he may have nothing to hinder his running his fastest, and, if it may be, winning the race. And the Bible gives this advice, "Let us lay aside every weight . . . and run the race."

When men like Peary and Amundsen and Scott and Shackleton start out to try to reach one of the

Poles, their ships are laden with months of provisions and with a multitude of things that may be needed in their long journey, but when they come nearer the Pole, and having a hundred or so miles to go over very rough country and in bitter cold weather, success lies in speed, in a "dash." Then it is that they reduce what they carry on the dog sleds to the very least with which they can get along.

All boats, from battleships and ocean liners to the smallest pleasure boats, have to be drawn up on shore or placed in a dry dock every once in so often, in order to have their hulls cleaned. A little crustacean called the barnacle, which when young floats around in the water, when older attaches itself to something; and it chooses such places as the piles that hold up docks or the hulls of boats as suitable homes. These collect very fast, and sometimes several tons of them may be found on one boat. Naturally their accumulation retards the boat, and that is why it is brought ashore to be scraped.

In the endeavour to float a vessel that has run aground, the cargo is often thrown overboard. If it is a cargo that floats like lumber, men may be able to rescue it later; if it does not float, like iron, or is ruined by water, like flour, they lose it; but it is better to lose the cargo and save the ship than to lose both; and the ship is often worth more than the cargo.

A balloonist will throw out bags of sand if he finds he is not rising fast or far enough to avoid striking church spires or the tops of trees.

This is all easy to understand; and it ought to be as easy to understand that if one is going to run the race of life, if one is going to rise in this world like a balloon, if one wishes to save oneself from a wreck, if one is to attempt to reach a goal, one must divest oneself of whatever hinders: bad habits and dishonesties and selfishnesses of all kinds. Christ even said if your right hand or an eye—which are perhaps the most valuable things we possess—stand in the way of your doing and living your best, you would better lose them; it is better to win a race without them than lose the race with them. This was His strong way of saying “let us lay aside every weight.”

And the weights that a runner lays aside are not merely those which can be seen. He does not say, “Oh, no one can see this weight that I have in my pocket; so I do not need to give that up.” He knows that it will hinder him just as much if invisible as if visible. So in the race of life we must give up even evil thoughts, for they handicap us just as truly as do the evil deeds which can be seen or the evil words which can be heard.

Now we are ready to add the little that was omitted from the word of the Bible already quoted twice: “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with

patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus."

3

POMEGRANATES

THE pomegranate is a bush which grows in Asia and has a fruit about the size of an orange. It is often mentioned in the Bible. (As you look at the word you would think it should be pronounced pomy-granate, but it is correctly pronounced pom-granate.) When the spies came back from Eschol they brought pomegranates and grapes as a proof of the fertility of the Promised Land.

The pomegranate has a little opening or mouth on the outside, and when this expands it splits open the whole fruit; and the Japanese have a proverb which says: "Only a pomegranate, is he who when he opens his mouth displays his whole heart." This is somewhat like what an Old Testament writer said: "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious: but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself." Neither of these two statements is strictly true; no lips can swallow the man who owns them, neither can any one open his mouth so wide as to show his heart. The American statement is nearer truth: "Every time he opens his mouth he puts his foot in it;" it is true of many babies at least.

But the real truth of these sentences is deeper than their literalness. As the mouth stands for what we speak with, and the heart represents what we are, the Japanese are very true when they liken a man to a pomegranate. It is true, and you can not help it. You say what you think, and, as the wise man said, "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." Whenever you speak you show what you are.

Do you speak harshly, angrily? Then do not we who hear you know that you are not a sweet and gentle person? If you speak politely and courteously, do we not know what kind of a boy or girl you are? Oh, our words are so much more important than we realize, because they reveal us, they show our hearts. Christ thought they were so important that He said: "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned;"—because our words reveal what we are. Yes, like a pomegranate, when we open our mouths to speak we show our hearts.

4

WHAT WAS IT?

A SHORT time ago a little five-year-old girl picked up her father's revolver, and pointing it at her mother, said playfully, "I'll shoot you, mama." She did not intend to do any such thing, but she did it; and her mother died later in the hospital. What was it that caused this tragedy?

In the city of Chicago over \$25,000,000 loss is sustained by fires; and nearly two thousand men, women and children are killed, while nearly 50,000 are seriously injured. Of course these fires and accidents are due to a large number of different causes; but in one word there is a single underlying cause to almost all of them. What is that one word?

The newspapers tell us almost every day of one or more accidents due to automobiles. Sometimes the car hits a man who is crossing the street; sometimes it skids into the ditch; and sometimes it is struck by a railroad train. The accidents are widely different, and they may have differing causes; but one trait in the person who was driving the car caused practically all of them. What is that one trait?

Many a fresh table-cloth is soiled the first time it is used, and mother has to wash it over again, adding to her already abundant amount of work.

Johnny's meat slipped off his plate, taking potato, and vegetable and gravy with it; or Mary knocked over her glass of milk. Or it may be the hall rug has to be swept all over again, because some one neglected to take off his rubbers or wipe his feet before he came in the house. In the one case we call it an accident, and in the other, forgetfulness; but one word, instead of two will describe them both. What is that one word?

Mother has gone to her room to get ready for bed. She has finished her long day, and the children are asleep. Mother is feeling badly, and if you could look closely you would see tears in her eyes. The cause of those tears is something one of her children had said to her. They had no idea it would hurt her so, and they hardly meant what they said. It was sheer —— What was it that caused the child so to hurt his mother?

The answer to all five of these questions, and to many other similar questions which deal with the world's misfortunes, is the same. It is: Carelessness.

5

FOLLOWERS

IN a humorous book that was written by a Frenchman a few years before Columbus discovered America, there is a character by the name of

Panurge. He was a crafty man, who decided to be revenged on a sheep-owner whom he disliked. He persuaded him to sell him one of his sheep, he himself to decide which one he would take; and he selected the bell-wether or leader of the flock, the one which all the other sheep followed. This one he threw overboard; all the others followed and were drowned, and thus he wreaked his vengeance.

A similar but nicer story is told by Livy, the historian of ancient Rome. In a certain march of the army a river was reached, over which all were transported easily except the elephants. It was expected that they would swim across, but none of them could be induced to enter the water. Finally the general stabbed one of the elephants quite ferociously, and promptly jumped into the water and swam across. The enraged elephant, seeking vengeance, also swam across; and immediately the other elephants followed him, and the desired transportation was accomplished. (Presumably the elephant that had been stabbed was killed as he reached the other side to avoid its killing the general.)

These are illustrations of how easy it is to be a Follower, and it is nearly as true of children as it is of sheep or elephants. Do you not recall the morning when you woke up ashamed of yourself as you recalled some things you had done the evening before? (Perchance it was the morning

after Hallowe'en.) You had done some things that now you are sorry for, and while you tried to excuse yourself by saying that you were led into them by others, you realized that that did not excuse you. You had to admit that you had been as foolish and thoughtless a Follower as the sheep and the elephants.

There are few things children have to be more on their guard against than this easy ability to follow. And, since it is a natural trait to be a Follower, one should most carefully see to it that one follows the right crowd and goes with the right people; or, as Moses said so many years ago, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil."

6

WHAT WE NEED

WHAT is the difference between a wild grape and one that is cultivated? The cultivated grape is larger, sweeter and juicier than the wild grape.

What is the difference between a wild apple and a cultivated apple? The wild apple is smaller, less juicy and tarter than the cultivated apple.

What is the difference between the wild maize or corn and the corn for which a boy in Iowa received a prize from the State? The boy's corn is larger and sweeter, and he secures more ears from an

acre than did the aborigines of America, who picked the wild corn wherewith to make their Indian meal.

What is the difference between a wild rose and a rose that you find in a man's garden or in his greenhouse? The wild rose is smaller; it is less fragrant, and it soon withers when picked; whereas the garden or greenhouse varieties grow to great sizes, have delicious fragrances, and will often last a whole week after being picked if they are given fresh water each day and are kept in a cool place.

What makes these differences in grapes and apples and corn and roses, and in a host of other things? It might seem as if the first answer is that God can not do as well alone as when He has man's help. That is true—or nearly true. Instead of saying that "God can not" we should say, "God does not" or "He will not." For that is perfectly true. When God wishes something done, or something improved, He does not do it Himself, He puts it into the hearts of men to do it; and that is why in the Bible we are called God's servants. As the master will not do the work himself, but has his servant do it, so God will not do most things but has His servants do them; as also the servant can not do them alone without the master's aid and advice. So men can not do things well without God's help.

God *can* make a better grape or apple or ear of corn or rose, and He *can* make a better boy and

girl without any help; but He does not do so without help from man. And of all these a better boy or girl is the greatest. Will you help Him make one boy or girl better, yourself?

7

COURAGE

EVERY child knows the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden; how the serpent tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit, how Eve tempted Adam to do likewise, how each one fell to the temptation, and how they were driven out of the Garden for their disobedience to God's command. Disobedience is the first thing we think of in the story, and the second is cowardice—the cowardice of Adam. You remember that God came to Adam and asked him if he had eaten of the forbidden fruit. This was his answer: "The woman gave me of the tree, and I did eat." That was a most cowardly answer. He laid the blame on Eve. It doubtless was true that Eve tempted him, but he did not thereby have to eat. It was his own fault if he did eat; and it was contemptible and cowardly for him to lay the blame on her. One should take one's own blame, or one is cowardly. To take one's own blame, "to take one's medicine like a man," that requires courage.

A coward may be one who runs away from his

duty, as occasionally a policeman may run away from a burglar or a soldier run away from battle, but he is just as much a coward who will not take the blame for something wrong that he did, he is still more of a coward if he lies his way out of it, and is most of a coward if he tries to lay the blame on some one else. Peter found Jesus very unpopular at one time, and as no one quite likes to be considered the friend of an unpopular man, he lied when he was asked if he were not one of Jesus' friends. This is what we know as the Denial of Peter, and the best thing we can say about it is that Peter regretted his cowardice and made up for it later.

George Washington was not a coward, if the familiar story about the cherry tree is true; for when he was asked if he had cut it down, he admitted that he had, though he faced punishment for doing so.

A hero is a man who does a brave deed; and a brave deed is anything that is hard or risky to do. A hero is always courageous, and cowardice is the opposite of courage. Be heroic and courageous; and not least in never laying the blame for your misdeeds on some one else.

8

WHAT KIND?

HERE is a little two-line verse that is well worth committing to memory:

*“What kind of a church would our church be,
If every member were just like me?”*

It is a question that makes one think, and it is always good to be made to think, especially when the thinking is about our conduct. Perhaps it would be better if we changed one line in the verse so that it reads this way:

*“What kind of a Sunday School would our school be,
If every member were just like me?”*

That makes you think a little more deeply, for you are more closely connected with the Sunday School than you are with the church. Would the opening exercises be quieter and more reverent, or would they be noisier and harder for the Superintendent; and would the Teacher have a more or a less successful period in the class room, “if every member were just like me”?

Again we may change one word, and do some more valuable thinking:

*“What kind of a town would our town be,
If every member were just like me?”*

This may not cause you to think quite as much as the other; but, when you start to throw some paper into the street or on to the sidewalk, it would be good to stop and think of what the town would look like if every one did likewise.

We will change the word once again:

*“What kind of play would our play be,
If every member were just like me?”*

Would there be continual bickerings and refusals to play unless things were done a little differently, or would all your playing be in a friendly and co-operative spirit?

It is easy to cast this sentence aside and say, “But I am only one; so what difference do I make?” A wise and good man once answered that question by saying, “I am only one; I can not do everything; but I can do something; therefore I will do whatever I can.” And one of the things one can do is so to live and act that “if every member were just like me” things would be better. One must not be conceited about it, or tell others so, but one may make it a rule of one’s life that “if every member were just like me,” church and Sunday School and town and home and play would all be better and brighter. That is a high and beautiful way to live.

9

THE AMERICAN INDIAN¹

ARE you familiar with the poem entitled " Phil Blood's Leap " ? It was written by Robert Buchanan, and is the story of an experience in the days when men were seeking gold in what is now the State of Texas. Indians were at that time very numerous, and these gold seekers saw much of them.

One day a minister in the camp, known as " Parson Pete " was speaking about them, and he said that while many men considered them poison, " and others count them scum," he knew better. Then he added: " Dirt is dirt, and snakes is snakes, but an Indian's flesh and bone! " Most of the men agreed with the Parson, but a tall, strong man from Maine, whose name was Phil Blood, disagreed entirely and positively. There was nothing on all the earth he hated as much as an Indian, and the sight of one roused him to murderous fury.

A few days later a Cheyenne Indian, Black Panther, came into camp with some of the white men. He was known to them all, having proved a good friend. He had brought them food when their own supply was getting dangerously low, and they all liked him;—all except Phil Blood. The

¹This might furnish a foundation for a longer sermon on Foreign Missions.

sight of this Indian making himself at home in the white man's camp caused him to rage and boil, until finally he boiled over, and with one leap he was after Black Panther with his upraised knife. The Indian was too swift for him, and escaped death.

Then began a life and death chase between Black Panther and Phil Blood, which took them at great speed through the rocky forest around their camp. Both were fleet and the white man could not overtake the Indian. One was spurred on by hate and murder, and the other ran literally "for dear life." After a little while the Indian suddenly came to a broad cleft in the rocks that went down a hundred feet or more. Without pausing to look, he gave one mighty spring, "a leap for a deer, not a man," and cleared the chasm, landing safely on the other edge.

Not to be outdone, Phil Blood came up, and he too made the leap; but he did not quite reach the other side. He slipped on the edge and fell. In falling he grasped a bush with his hands, and in this precarious position hung over that yawning abyss. His friends ran up, but were powerless to help him, as they were on the wrong side of the chasm.

While they stood there, wondering how long before he would be forced to let go and fall to his death, they saw Black Panther approach the edge and peer down. They looked to see him rejoice

over the approaching end of his opponent; instead of that they saw him lean over, grasp Phil Blood's two wrists and lift him up on to solid ground. For a minute they stood facing each other, Phil Blood and Black Panther, white man and Indian. Then Blood turned and walked slowly back to camp.

Ever after this when any one quoted his own words, he replied: "It's a lie. Dirt is dirt, and snakes are snakes; but an Indian's flesh and bone!"

IO

LEADERS

ON October 19, 1864, General Philip H. Sheridan was located at Winchester, Virginia, during the Civil War of the United States. News reached him that a battle with part of his forces was being fought at a place called Cedar Creek, twenty miles away. He jumped on his horse and galloped that score of miles, an account of which is found in a poem that is familiar to most of us. Reaching his destination he found his troops in hasty retreat, but he rallied them and led them back to victory. George Washington did a similar thing at the battle of Monmouth Court House during the Revolutionary War.

Such is the power that a leader can have over men. He can turn retreat into advance, cowardice

into courage, and defeat into victory. It seems curious at first that it should be so. If men can be turned around in that way under the leadership of a single man, why can not they do it by themselves? Perhaps the simplest answer will be found in watching a boat, and the difference between the course it takes when it is alone and the course it holds when a man is sitting in the stern holding the tiller. Both boats and men need some one to lead or steer them. Neither of them get along very well by themselves.

There is a sense in which children have an easier time than those who are older, because they have a number of leaders. They have their parents at home, their teachers in school, and the Sunday School teachers. The child who pays heed to them is kept from retreating and being defeated, and, after defeat and retreat, can be turned around to victory and success. It is a great thing to have such people to follow, who seek your best interests and furnish you leadership for victories.

To both old and young there is also another Leader who never fails, and through whom and for whom parents and teachers act. As people followed Him of old and were made well and happy, so all who follow Him to-day are led in the paths of success and victory. And if one has followed the wrong path, or has begun to go backwards, under His leadership one can be turned around as the retreating soldiers were turned around to face

the enemy when General Sheridan arrived. Of course you know His name: it is Jesus Christ, the greatest of all Leaders.

II

BUSYBODIES

ST. PAUL traveled in both Asia and Europe preaching Christ, and he also wrote many letters on the same subject, several of which are in our New Testament. In one of them he put this sentence: "We hear that there are some who are busybodies;" and in another one he wrote that there were some women who were "not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." St. Peter wrote that Christians might have a hard time and be made to suffer, but he added: "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." He evidently thought it was nearly as bad to be a busybody as to be a murderer, a burglar or one who does evil.

A busybody is one who is too interested in other people's affairs. In consequence he is almost never interested enough in his own affairs and as to how he should or should not do things. Furthermore other people's affairs are really none of his concern; and we all have enough to do living our own lives without using up our energies on other

people's lives. Each one's great task in life is not to make other people behave, but in the harder task of making oneself behave. And yet there are still people (and children) who are busybodies.

"Look what John is doing!" That is a sentence often heard, and it is almost always spoken by a busybody. What is meant is that he is doing something that he ought not to do, or something to which the one speaking objects. But after all, that is no concern of theirs.

"Mother, make Mary behave!" That too is often heard, and is usually spoken by a busybody, especially if Mary was not misbehaving toward the one who is speaking but toward some one else. And if mother is wise she might answer as Jesus answered Peter, (and it may have been from this answer of Jesus that Peter learned to feel so strongly about the busybodies): "What is that to thee; follow thou me."

The best way to make others stop doing what is wrong and what you do not like, is silently to do what is right yourself; and the worst way to make the world better is by being a busybody, because then you are not taking heed to your own life.

12

MR. MAHON¹

MR. MAHON'S name is too long to use as a title, and so we have to call him Mr. Mahon there. But here, where we have more room, we will give his name in full: James Patrick O'Gorman Mahon. He died about 1890, and, as you can guess, he was born and brought up in Ireland. For a considerable time he was active in the politics of Ireland; but on the whole he spent more of his life in Paris than on Erin's Isle. Like most Irishmen he loved to fight. He fought twenty-two duels, which are single-handed fights like that between David and Goliath; and he also fought in the armies of Austria, Brazil, Chile, France, Russia, Turkey and Uruguay (and perhaps in the armies of some other countries too).

When he was in Chile he became tired of being a soldier, though not of fighting, and he asked if he could be transferred from the army to the navy. His request was granted and he was made an Admiral. When in an army he was sometimes a captain, sometimes a colonel, often a general, and once he held higher rank than general (which very few men do in any country). He never married

¹This is usable on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday; add a word concerning the stick-to-it-iveness necessary if one plans to observe Lent in the customary way—denying oneself something for those forty days.

(though he had many girls of whom he was quite fond, and many more who were very fond of him), so he was free to travel as he pleased, and he certainly covered a large part of the globe. For, beside the countries already mentioned, he had lived in India and China. And he lived long enough in Germany to be intimately acquainted with the Crown Prince of that country and with Herr Bismark. He was an energetic man, a capable man, a brilliant man.

And yet he never really amounted to anything. His name is not found in encyclopædias, and he is not one of the world's heroes. The reason why is easily found; he never stayed in one place, nor stuck to one task, long. Success is born of being less like James Patrick O'Gorman Mahon and more like the humble postage stamp, which sticks to its one task all its life.

13

TABERAH

WHAT is Taberah? It might be the name of a chemical, or of a breakfast food, or the title of a book; or it might be the name of a town or of a mountain; or it might be a word from a foreign language; or perchance it is a man's name; or ——— You see, it *might* be a great many things. The truth is that it is two things, and two of the

several that were just suggested. It is a foreign word, and it is the name of a place. It is mentioned in the book of Numbers, chapter eleven, verse three, where we are also told how the place received its name. It is one of the places where the children of Israel stayed for a while on their famous journey, or exodus, from Egypt to Palestine. It is not one of the familiar places, like the Red Sea, Mount Sinai or Mount Nebo (do you know what those places were famous for?); in fact it is very unfamiliar, and it is only mentioned twice. The second time is in Deuteronomy (9: 22) when Moses reminded them of what had occurred there. There are 31,173 verses in the Bible, and Taberah is mentioned in only two of them.

Nevertheless Taberah is important; for it was here that "the people complained." Of course God heard the people complain as easily as Moses did, and we read that "it displeased the Lord." Of course it did; complaint displeases every one, and especially God. It displeased Moses because he was doing his best, just as it displeased George Washington when his soldiers complained. In each case things were not very pleasant, but Moses and Washington were doing their best. The disagreeable things could not be helped, and certainly complaining did not help them; it only made things worse for everybody.

There are a great many places in the world worth going to. It is good to go to the Red Sea

and see the wonderful work of God. It is good to go to Mount Sinai—oh, very good!—and hear the Ten Commandments. It is good to go to Mount Nebo and see one of God's great men calmly die. But oh, it is *not* worth while ever to go to Taberah, where people complain. Keep away from Taberah; and hear this again: The people complained and it displeased the Lord.

14

A WATERMELON

ONCE upon a time there was a small boy who was unusually fond of watermelons, and his father suggested that he might grow some of his own in the garden. So when spring came he dug up a small patch and sowed a few seeds according to the directions printed on the envelope. As often happens, not all of the seeds came up; in this case only a few in fact. And of these few, only one flourished. The others languished and died; but the one grew and flourished and bade fair to give the boy at least one of those large green fruits (so lusciously red on the inside) of which he was so fond.

And he took excellent care of it all summer, watching it and tending it as it spread out over the ground, even though but one melon appeared on the vine. The man of the Old Testament who had

but one little lamb did not watch and prize his possession more lovingly than did this boy his one and solitary watermelon. He soon forgot his disappointment that his vines had become but one vine, and that there was not more fruit on it, so wholly captivated was he with this one that was his, all his. And as early fall approached he was anxious to pick it; but ever his father deterred him by assuring him that it was not yet ripe enough. And later every day his father had to answer his urgent requests by saying: "Not yet, my boy; let it grow longer, till it becomes truly ripe and juicy." Impatiently the boy waited, each day hoping that father would advise him to pick it.

Finally that day did come, or rather, the day before came, when father said, "To-morrow you may pick the watermelon." Eagerly the boy waited for the morrow, paying the green fruit a last visit before he went in for the night. Eagerly he rose and dressed the next day, hastening out to pick and bring in to the house that one choice, long-tended melon. And—it was gone, it was not there! Some one had helped himself to it on that last night.

Bitterly did the boy cry, and semi-resentfully did he rebuke his father for not having let him pick it earlier, even one day earlier. But after all, tears and rebukes were of no avail; they would not bring back the melon. When the first pangs of disappointment were a little assuaged, his father

gently showed him how much anguish the unknown man had caused by his pilfering, he who thought only of his own gain and not of the owner's loss. Like the melon itself that little seed bore fruit and grew in the boy, who ever after considered matters not merely from his own point of view, but from some one else's. He learned the meaning of the valuable line, "Put yourself in his place."

15

DUSTING

THE air is everywhere filled with dust, even though we do not see it. We are only aware of it when a ray of light shines into a semi-dark room; then we note the particles of it dancing and cavorting in the air, looking like a snowfall composed of small and dusky-hued flakes. Like the snowflakes these particles of dust gradually settle on everything, as you know when you go into an unoccupied room, and can write your name with your finger on the top of the table.

One of mother's daily tasks is to remove this dust; it is an important part of housekeeping; and there are three ways in which it may be done.

1. There is the old-fashioned method of using a feather-duster. It is the easiest way; so easy, in fact, that few children object to the task. But it

is also the most worthless way, because the dust is only scattered and made to fly around in the air. By and by it will settle on the furniture again. So this method is seldom employed nowadays.

2. The common way is to use a damp cloth. This is rubbed over the chairs and the tables, and the dust clings to the cloth. Then the cloth is shaken out of the window, and thus the dust is driven out of the house entirely.

3. The third way can hardly be called dusting at all, because it is prevention rather than cure, and does not allow the dust to collect. It is done by means of Use. The chair that is not sat on collects dust, but naturally the chair that is used constantly has no opportunity to collect it, and therefore does not require dusting. If I go into your room and see two books on your table, and one has a layer of dust on it and the other has not, I know that you have not been reading the dusty one recently, and I know equally well that you have been reading the other.

Here, then, are three ways of ridding books and furniture of dust. A question remains, an important one: By which of these three methods do you keep dust off your Bible?

16

"I CAN'T AFFORD IT"

MANY a time have you heard father say that. It was not very pleasant to hear, because it was usually said after you had asked him to do something for you, to let you go somewhere, or to buy something you very much wanted. You were unusually anxious to have that particular request granted, and (what perchance you did not know) father was unusually anxious to grant it, and it was as hard for him to say "I can't afford it," as it was for you to hear him say it—probably it was harder for him than it was for you. But the matter was settled right then and there. When father said, "I can't afford it," you knew that no argument was possible after that.

And of course you have said it yourself many times, when you knew your little allowance was not enough to enable you to buy even some little thing that you wanted.

In both of these cases, your own and father's, you were thinking about money. But there are other ways in which the sentence can be used which have no reference to money. There is the time when some one invites you to go skating or swimming, to play ball or to go to the movies. You answer, "I can't afford it," and what you mean now is, that you can not afford the time. There

are lessons to be learned, or some duty to do, which take up the time that you can not afford to spend on something else.

When you are tempted to tell a lie, to lose your temper, or to do an unkind act, it is often a great help in overcoming to say, "I can't afford it." It would make some one else unhappy, it is wrong, it would lower me in my own estimation, and it would displease God and my parents, and that is too much to pay for a few minutes' selfish gratification. "I can't afford it," will often settle a wrong suggestion as quickly as another matter is settled when father speaks the same words.

17

THE PORCUPINE

NATURE has given to every creature that lives two things that compensate each other. One is enemies. Every living creature has some other creature that preys upon it when it can. The other is a method of defending itself. No creature submits meekly to its enemies; it avoids them or defends itself from them with the means Nature has given it.

Such animals as lions, elephants and rhinoceroses are strong and can fight. The elephant uses his tusks, with his great weight behind them, as does

the rhinoceros his horn; and the lions and tigers use teeth, claws and brute strength.

Such gentle animals as deer, antelopes, and giraffes are built for fleetness; they escape their enemies by flight. So does the rabbit; as do also the meadow mice. Chipmunks are swift for a short distance, and flee to a home in the ground or amid the rocks. In the same way woodchucks and prairie dogs escape from their enemies; and small birds, which can seldom outfly the hawk, owl or shrike, can plunge into a thicket too dense for the pursuer to enter.

Snakes can bite, or they can frighten off their enemies with a hiss and a threatened strike; and some few can kill with poisoned fangs. Skunks are the originators of the gas attack, into which no other creature can enter.

Different from all these, and more unique than the skunk, which has several feeble imitators, is the porcupine, which can neither fight nor run, hide or shoot a gas. Nature has given it a unique weapon, which may be called intangibility. That is a hard word, but simply means that-which-cannot-be-touched. The porcupine is intangible, just as some things are invisible. Its hair or fur is not soft and sleek like a cat's or a mink's; it is long, coarse, and sharp—very sharp. It is not only sharply pointed, but each quill, as its hairs are called, has a small barb near the end, like that of a fish hook. Let its enemy attempt to attack it,

and literally dozens and even hundreds of these quills not only come out of the porcupine without hurting it at all, but they enter into the enemy, hurting it very much; and because of the barb they stay in, and are very hard to extract.

As a result the porcupine has very few enemies. It has no need to hurry or to fight; all it has to do is to go contentedly along about its business, and in that way it defends itself. It is an excellent way of defence, especially against mean things that are said against us. It is hard to fight (or talk back), and it is tiring to run away. It is easy just to do nothing and to say nothing. It does not hurt us, but, as in the case of the porcupine, the attack does eventually hurt the enemy.

18

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM¹

THERE are many things in the world that you do not know as well as you think you do. The 23rd Psalm is one of them; for while you can recite it perfectly, do you really know just what it all means? Let us try to explain some of its sentences.

Palestine is a rough country, with none too much

¹ This can be more effectively told in the Sunday School than in the church. A child on all fours may represent a sheep; the story may be visualized by the children, especially the part concerning anointing with oil. Consult Dr. Knight's *The Song of Our Syrian Guest* before using this.

water or green grass; and much of the ground is hard and barren. One of the duties of the shepherd is to find soft places for the sheep when they wish to rest, and so he maketh them "to lie down in green pastures." The water often tumbles down over rocks, and if the sheep try to drink from it they are in danger of falling in and being lost. The shepherd must find water for them that is free of danger, and so he leadeth them "beside the still waters," sometimes a quiet pool, sometimes a man-made well.

There are dangers to the sheep, chief of which is the wolf. Left to themselves the sheep would soon be destroyed, but the shepherd cares for them. With the curved end of his rod (which is familiar through all pictures which illustrate the Mother Goose rhymes of Little Boy Blue and Little Bo Peep) he reaches out and draws back a sheep that might wander too far and be caught by a wolf just waiting for that chance for a good meal. And with a heavier staff he can beat off a wolf that with more daring has approached too close to the flock. That is why we read (and it is a sheep who is supposed to be speaking): "I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me"—by comfort is meant both protection and peace.

Then when the day's pasturing is over, and the shepherd has led them hither and yon, the sheep are brought home to spend the night in the fold.

The entrance to this fold is narrow, just wide enough to permit one sheep to enter at a time. As each one approaches the door the shepherd runs his hand over its head and back, and if everything is all right it is allowed to enter; if not it is held for a minute. Often in feeding with head down, and nosing in among rocks or brambles for another mouthful of green grass, a sheep will bruise or scratch its head. So when the shepherd finds a sheep thus hurt, he holds him gently with one hand and with the other takes some soothing oil from a horn that hangs by his side, and gently bathes the wounds, before he permits it to enter the fold for the night. This explains that part of the Psalm which reads: "Thou anointest my head with oil."

It is a beautiful psalm, the most beautiful of all. It is not in the Bible because God wishes us to know about sheep, but in order to teach us that, as the shepherd cares for the sheep, God cares for us.

19

WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

IN the central part of what is now the State of New York an Indian boy was born about the year 1750. As was customary, no particular name was given to him, for the Indians felt that one's

name should describe some characteristic. So when later it was revealed that this boy was a quick-witted and energetic lad, he was named O-te-ti-ani, which means, "Always ready." As he grew still older he revealed the powers of an orator, so he was given a new name, Sa-go-ye-wat-ha. That means, "He keeps them awake;" truly a good name for a rousing orator; and he is generally considered the most eloquent speaker that the Indians ever produced.

When he was about twenty-five years old, the American Revolutionary War broke out, and he became, as did so many of these fleet-footed redskins, a runner for the British. A runner conveyed messages and secured information in the days when the telephone, the telegraph and the wireless were not dreamed of. One day he was dining with Sir William Johnson, who was a good friend to and a great believer in the Indians, and who at this meal was wearing a red admiral's coat. Suddenly the Indian said to him: "I dreamed a dream last night." "And what was your dream?" politely and curiously asked Sir William. "I dreamed that you gave me that red coat," answered he; and in accordance with etiquette among the Indians, Sir William was obliged to give his friend the red coat. So immensely proud was Sa-go-ye-wat-ha of this coat or jacket, as he called it, that he earned another name, that of Red Jacket; and by that name he has ever since been known.

We may laugh at the way the Indians name their children, and at the way they change their names to fit them as they grow older. But, after all, is it not more sensible than to assign names which have no meaning at all? Here is a girl whose parents named her Elizabeth. It is an excellent name and has a wonderful meaning: "Worshiper of God." But what a foolish name for a girl if she happened to grow up not to be a worshiper of God. Or, here is a boy named George. It is another excellent name, and means, "Husbandman." But what if the boy grew up in the city, never saw a farm, and was in no sense of the word a husbandman? It really looks as if the Indians were more sensible in their names than we are.

We can not change our names, at least not without a great deal of legal annoyance. But here is an interesting question: What *would* my name be if I were an Indian?

20

ABOVE THE SNAKE LINE

THERE is an old tradition that comes from the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts (which is also mentioned in one of the letters of the poet William Cullen Bryant, who was born and lived so much of the early part of his life there), and is to the effect that when the hills were first occupied

by settlers, they found that there were very dangerous snakes down in the valleys. There was the rattlesnake, the poisonous adder and the copperhead. In order to avoid these dangerous reptiles men built their homes further up in the hills, safely away from the valleys. And the old tradition said that there was a point above which the snakes would not go. It was beyond this point and above the snake line that men wisely erected their houses. Then men were secure, their children were not in danger, and they all lived in safety.

Whether the tradition be a truth or only a tradition matters little. Common sense is in it in either case. And there are places, such as India, where various precautions have to be taken constantly to avoid the dangers from larger and more poisonous snakes than ever Massachusetts has known in all her history. Houses there are often built on piles, or stilts, up which a snake can not easily climb; and thus men can at least sleep safely at night. A naturalist in Guiana in South America tells of wishing to study a large army of ants which devour everything over which they move, and who did so at close range by sitting on a chair in their midst, the legs of which were set in cans of kerosene. The oil prevented the ants from climbing up the chair and devouring him, and from his safe perch he could study them at ease and in safety.

Many birds build their nests close to the water on the beach, or in a bush overhanging a stream;

but the nest is always so wisely placed that the high tide of the ocean or the flooded condition of the river will never quite reach it. It is always safe. The bird never engages in the foolish attempt of trying to see how close it can go without getting wet, but like the builders in the Berkshires, goes far enough away to be secure. This is unlike the child who tries to see how close it can get to the water without wetting its feet, and who always ends by getting its feet wet. It is foolish not to build and stay above the snake line, where you know you are safe. Playing with fire, or dallying with temptation is risky business. "Safety first" is as good a rule in one's moral life as in railroad-ing or factory work.

21

GLASS

ONCE upon a time a London policeman (a "bobby," he is called there) was attracted by the peculiar action of an old and shabbily-dressed woman in one of the city parks. He saw her lean over, pick something from the ground, and place it in her apron which she held in one hand. He thought that she must have picked up a purse which some one had dropped, and that she had no intention of reporting it in order to find the owner. He went over to her, and rather roughly

demanded, "Here, what have you got in your apron?" adding that he would arrest her if she did not show him. The frightened woman opened her apron and showed the astonished officer a handful or more of broken pieces of glass. "What in the world do you want with that rubbish?" he asked her. "I just thought I'd take it out of the way of the children's feet," she replied. She had a kind thought for children, and only God knows how many feet were not cut that day because of that woman's act.

A boy went in swimming, in company with many other boys and a few grown men, in a brook among the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. As he walked in he stepped on the jagged edge of a broken bottle which some one had thrown in there. The middle of his foot was cut about half way through, and it took two of the men and two of the boys to carry him a mile along a narrow path in the woods till they came to a road where they could hail an automobile. All the while the foot had to be held high to keep the cut from bleeding profusely.

In due time the doctor was reached, and he said that the glass came within an eighth of an inch of cutting a tendon which would have lamed the boy for life. It was bad enough as it was, laying the boy up from all wholesome activities for several weeks; and it was all due to the carelessness of some unknown man or child.

As far as glass is concerned, there are two rules which every child should know, and practice:

1. *Never* break glass if you can help it. (Resist the impulse to break a bottle.)

2. *Always* brush out of the way any pieces of glass that you see.

22

A LOST CHURCH

ONCE upon a time there was a church (they called it a chapel) in Cornwall, England, which was lost. You will admit that you never heard of a church being lost before. The list of "Losses and Finds" is a long one, and includes everything from babies and dogs to umbrellas and automobiles. But to lose a church! Whoever heard of such a thing? Still more curious it is that, even though this church was lost, every one knew where it was. It had disappeared; it was swallowed up by the sand till only the tip of the spire was visible; like the church which Baron Munchausen told of which was swallowed up in one night by a snowstorm which engulfed it to the tip of its spire; with the difference that the baron was telling a story, and this about the church in England is the truth. And though every one knew where it was, it was of just as little value to them

as if they did not know where it was. And that is equivalent to being lost, is it not?

Here, then, was a church that left the people. Oftener the people leave the church. Business changes and people leave town to live elsewhere, leaving the church, as well as all the other buildings. And so we have an abandoned church, whose roof falls in, whose windows break, and whose walls and floors are overgrown with weeds and vines. An abandoned church is a pathetic sight.

Sometimes a church burns down; sometimes an earthquake overthrows it; sometimes it is turned around and perhaps a steeple erected on it; sometimes it is so altered that it bears little or no resemblance to its former self; sometimes it is moved bodily and set up in another part of the city; and sometimes it is sold and used for a warehouse or a library or a store.

A great many things can happen to a church, and many of them are sad; but the saddest thing of all that can happen to a church is to have it *neglected*.

Or, if there is something sadder than the saddest, it is to have the church neglected by the children, for its very existence to-morrow depends on the children of to-day.

23

ROPES¹

EVERY boy and girl knows something of the history of Plymouth, the city in Massachusetts, on whose site the Pilgrim Fathers made their settlement after their voyage from England in the "Mayflower." And every year thousands of people visit it to see Plymouth Rock, and to wander through the streets, stopping every now and then to read the many tablets which make it so easy to visualize how and where our ancestors lived in that bleak winter of 1620-1. They also visit the museum with its interesting relics, and the cemetery where lie buried so many of the early settlers. A few climb the hill further back, where the government has raised a massive monument, and gazing over the ocean picture the desolate scene as those courageous ancestors of ours saw it over three hundred years ago.

But Plymouth is to-day more than a city of memory. It is a live factory city, and has one of the largest rope factories in the world. And they use a phrase to describe their ropes which reads: "You can always trust Plymouth ropes." Undoubtedly that is why the factory is so large; it has grown

¹This can be expanded for Armistice Day to show how wars are born of one nation's not being able to trust another nation. This involves a slightly different meaning of the word trust; its antonym would be fear.

because its business has grown; and the business has grown because "you can always trust Plymouth ropes." That is the kind of rope one wants to buy; of what value is a rope if you can not trust it? When you see a safe being hoisted from the street to a window high up on a building, you always think of what would happen if the rope broke; but if the men know that the rope is the kind that can be trusted, they have little to worry about. And when we think of all the rope used in the riggings of ships, and in derricks, and in the life lines of our coast guard, and for holding anchors, we realize how many men stay alive because the ropes can be trusted. And we also realize that a rope which can not be trusted is not worth much.

But Plymouth ropes are not the only things of which it may be, and should be, said that you can always trust them. Boys and girls are of more importance than ropes. The word trustworthy is a mighty word; it means that a rope or a boy or a girl is worthy of trust. If a factory can advertise, "You can always trust Plymouth ropes," should not you and I be able to say: "You can always trust me"? Can you think of anything greater to be able to say of yourself?

24

“OUT OF MY WAY, PLEASE”

THERE are many ways of asking people to get out of one's way. They may be equally good ways, and undoubtedly are if that magic word “please” is always used with them.

A railroad dining-car porter going down the aisle with a laden tray perched high on the extended fingers of one hand, says to another waiter who is unconsciously blocking his way, “’Tention,” and the way is instantly made clear for him.

The sailor or the stevedore, carrying some heavy load or pushing a wheelbarrow, says, “Gangway,” and the way is made clear for him.

The golfer cries, “Fore” and those who are in the path of an approaching ball either watch to see where it will land, or they step to one side.

The locomotive whistles; on the automobile is a horn; a bicyclist usually uses a bell; the dog barks; and a tyrant puts the man out of the way by having him slain. The lighthouse uses a bell, whistle or siren to guide the mariner away from the rocks or reef in a fog; and the fire engine shrieks out with the loudest noise it can command; while mother generally employs the gentlest of tones.

The Bible has given us a method used by Jesus, at a time when He wished the devil to get out of

His way. It was when He was being tempted, for He could be tempted to do wrong just as you and I can be and are tempted. But He was so determined that, though tempted, He would not do the evil that was suggested, that we not only have no record that He ever did wrong, but the Apostle Paul wrote that "He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." To accomplish this, He had to say to the temptation, "Out of my way," and He did it by practically saying, "I will not do what you suggest! I will do God's will!" That put the temptation out of the way.

Jesus' way is the best way for us.

25

WHICH WAY?

D ID you ever have to do something you did not like, something you did not want to do?

That is a very foolish question, because whoever is asked it must answer, "Of course I have, a great many times." So we will go on to ask another question which is not quite so foolish, and which can not be answered quite so promptly. The second question is: What did you do about it? There are four answers to that question.

1. You cried and screamed and objected and became angry and said "I won't!!" (and it takes at least two exclamation marks to express all the

vehemence you put into those words). Let us hope *you* never did this, but we all know that some children have done so.

2. You shirked it and ran away. Sometimes this can be done; and therefore, alas, it sometimes is done.

3. You did it. That was simply because you *had* to; but you did it sullenly, silently, disagreeably and badly.

4. You did it, not simply because you had to, but because, since you had to, you felt that you might as well make it as easy as possible. So you did it cheerfully, thoroughly, as well as you could, and as quickly as you could while still doing it well.

And now a third question is: Which was the best way of doing it? And that too is almost as foolish a question as the other ones, because the answer is so easy.

A fourth question is just as simple: Which gave you and others the most happiness?

26

WRONG DIRECTIONS

THE following story is vouched for as true in every respect, and relates a sad event that occurred in England a year or two ago.

It was cold and snowy as a train was ploughing through the night, pulled by two engines.

On board was a young woman, with a baby in her arms, whose destination was a certain station where the train only stopped to let off those who had come from a long distance. She had made arrangements with the conductor for this; and when finally the brakeman announced that it would be the next stop, she made her preparations to get off. A kindly gentleman who sat near her, offered to help her and to be sure that she got off. A little while later the train slowed down and stopped, and the gentleman said, "Here's your station, lady." Thanking him, she stepped out of the train, into the storm.

Almost immediately the train started; and a little later it slowed down again. At this the brakeman entered the car, and after looking around in a puzzled way, said to the gentleman, "Where's that woman with the baby who was here?" "Oh," answered the gentleman, "she got off at the last stop; that was her station." "Then she has gone to her death!" exclaimed the brakeman. "We only stopped the train there because there was a little something wrong with one of the engines. There wasn't a station or even a house for miles from there."

When the train stopped at the station, volunteers were called for, who went back to look for her and the baby. They searched for hours, and finally found her, covered with a shroud of ice and snow, dead from cold and exposure, and with the little

babe, also dead, folded to her breast. She had followed the man's directions, which were gladly given, but they were wrong directions, and they led to her death and the death of her baby.

Whose directions do you follow? Other boys' and girls'? or father's and mother's, your conscience and God?

27

"IF I WILL"

ONE of the most frequently heard short sentences is, "I will if I can." When a person is asked to do something, or to go somewhere, or to help in some affair, the reply often is, "I will if I can." It is generally spoken rather carelessly, and is used to save oneself from being committed to something in which one is not very much interested. But if sincerely spoken, it is an excellent sentence. It means then: "What you ask it may not be possible for me to do; but I will do it if I can."

An even better sentence uses the same five words, but places them in a different order, so that it reads, "I can if I will." That makes quite a different sentence, and is not used where we are not interested, but where the matter may be a difficult one. The trouble with facing a difficult matter is in making it out more difficult than it really is, till finally one thinks it is *too* difficult; and then it is

left undone and untried. This sentence, "I can if I will," saves us from that. Of course it can not always be true, as in the case of being asked to fly over the moon; but generally most things are not quite as difficult as we think they are. But this we never can find out until we use these five words in this order, "I can if I will."

A good friend of Dr. Grenfell wrote a book¹ about him in which you will find these words, "When Grenfell set out to do a thing he did it. He never in all his life said, 'I will if I can.' His motto has always been, 'I *can* if I will.' He had determined to plant hospitals on the Labrador coast and to send doctors and nurses there to help the people. When he determined to do a thing there was an end of it. It would be done." And when you read the chapter entitled "Facing an Arctic Blizzard," you realize how much power there is in, "I can if I will."

28

THE RUINED KNIFE¹

YOU see before you a knife. It is variously called a hunting knife, a camper's knife, a sheath knife. The latter name is given it because it is worn in a sheath which fastens to one's belt, and is as handy to take out for use as it was for

¹ *The Story of Grenfell of the Labrador*, by Dillon Wallace (Fleming H. Revell Company).

our ancestors to whip out their swords from the scabbards. This knife was purchased twenty-five years ago, and at that time was new, sharp, and useful; now, as you can see, it is old, dull and useless. It was last used to dig weeds from the lawn.

It was bought for use on camping trips, and many and varied were the things it did. It has cut many a twig and branch of kindling wood for the fire. It has lopped off many a spray of green balsam for a soft bed of boughs. It has sliced many a loaf of bread. It has cut many a piece of meat. It has dressed and scaled many a fish. It has cut many a Gordian knot, which time, pressure and moisture had pulled too tight for time or patience to untie. It has cut off many a piece of plaster or bandage for use on the cut which itself may have caused. It has even been used to trim some of the hair that had grown too long in days of roughing-it. Long and many are the uses to which it has been put.

But now look at it: too dull to cut anything but butter; too battered to look attractive. And why? because it was misused. It was hastily laid on, or jammed into the moist ground, which no knife ever should be. It has come too close to the flames. And it has been used to cut materials too hard and rough for its nature. Consequently it is ruined.

Back of the making of its blade is a long and important process, which is called tempering. It

required the use of excessive heat and sudden cooling, until the right consistency and colouring and sharpness were acquired, and it could be sent out to be sold to a fortunate purchaser. But now it is practically worthless, and all because *it has lost its temper!*

29

THE EYES OF THE LORD

IN the second book of the Chronicles (at the sixteenth chapter) Hanani says to King Asa, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." Of course in a certain sense Hanani made an impossible statement; for, to begin with, eyes can not run to and fro on the earth, and even if they could, they could not help men. A hand might be able to help a man, but not an eye. But neither can "the trees clap their hands" nor the "morning stars sing together."

These are what we call "figures of speech," as we say, "How do you do?" when we mean, "How are you feeling?" and are not asking how a person does a certain thing. It is similar to and yet very different from the figure that Peter used, when he told us that "the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." If that

were strictly and literally true, do you not think some one would have seen him some time? On the other hand it is true; and so is Hanani's statement about the eyes of the Lord running to and fro on the earth.

You have long known that God's eyes see everything. Hagar learned that centuries ago, when, driven into the wilderness with her boy, she thought they were absolutely and entirely alone; but she found that God was with her, and she exclaimed: "Thou God seest me." Millions of people have said those words after her, and have felt safer and been more contented. Unfortunately many children, who also know those words, think of them as of a God who is forever spying on them, eager to catch them doing wrong. That is a very wrong idea of God; He dislikes to see any one doing wrong. His great joy and desire is to see people doing good. So, when you remember that God sees you, recall that He is unhappy if He sees you doing wrong and very happy if He sees you doing right.

That is what Hanani meant; but he also meant and said something more. Read again what he told the king, and see how God, when He finds any one who wants to do good, gives that one strength. It is hard to do good, and easy to do wrong. It takes such difficult virtues as courage and strength, persistence and perseverance to do right; and the best boys and girls wish all the help

they can secure in order to have these virtues with which they may resist the wrong and do the good. And of all helps none is greater or more never-failing than what Hanani told King Asa: “The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.”

That is prayer. Prayer is not merely getting down on our knees and asking God to give us something we very much wish, whether that is a pleasant day or courage. The best part of prayer is knowing that God is everywhere to help us, and to give us His strength that we may always do what is right.

30

“TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR”

A FEW years ago there was a revival (most unfortunately) of a deadly feeling between whites and negroes in the State of Mississippi; and the principal of a school for coloured children has told one phase of it in a book entitled *Piney Woods*, named from the town in which he has a school.

It seems that he had a friend who was a minister, also a coloured man, who was holding some special services in his church, and who asked him (though not a minister) to come and help him conduct these services. He was glad to go, and all

went well until the third evening when he preached a little differently than on the two previous evenings. In his sermon he called on his hearers to look on life as a warfare; he called them to battle against ignorance, and poverty, and superstition and sin—the same kind of sermon that almost every minister has preached at one time or another.

At this time, unfortunately, some white men happened to be riding by. It was in the summer and the door of the church was open. They stopped to listen a few minutes to the preaching, and caught these militant words calling for warfare. Not stopping to listen further, they rushed into the town and spread the news that a coloured preacher was urging the negroes “to rise up and fight the white people.” Of course they totally misunderstood what he had been urging them to do.

The next day about fifty men rode up to the church, and called out this preacher. To make a long story short, because the rest of it is less important for our purposes, they threw a rope around his neck and drove him some distance to where a tree stood with a strong horizontally-projecting limb. Over this they threw the rope which was noosed around his neck, and beneath it was an as-yet-unlighted pile of brush and dead limbs. They were going to hang him first, and burn him afterwards. Just before this was done one man called out that he make a speech.

Realizing that perhaps life and death hung on that speech, with a silent prayer to God for help, he began. Naturally he explained just what he had said the evening before, that he had no intention whatsoever of exciting the negroes to insurrection and murder, and that in fact in his school he had always taught his children otherwise. Before he had finished one old man in the crowd stepped forward and explained to the crowd that they were making a mistake, and that what this man had said was wholly true, calling to them to let the man go. They rather reluctantly did so, a little disappointed in missing what they called the “fun” of killing another negro; and the preacher was allowed to go home.

It was as narrow an escape as a man can ever experience, and it was an equally narrow escape for that mob who nearly put to death an innocent man; and all because a few young men had heard both correctly and incorrectly. They indeed had heard him preach battle and warfare, but they had not listened carefully enough to hear what this battle and warfare was to be against. And many of the misunderstandings of the world, that often cause hatred and bad feeling, if not murder, are due to such inaccuracy in hearing and the drawing of wrong conclusions from what one does hear.

No wonder that Jesus wisely said, “Take heed how ye hear.”

31

HANDICAPS

THE following account is taken from a daily newspaper of New York City:

“ ‘ Rosie Sunshine ’ is not her name. But ‘ Rosie Sunshine,’ an armless girl, has won a gold medal for penmanship in a real school, and what is more significant, she won it in competition with children who have flesh-and-blood arms, not the mechanical contrivances with artificial, flexible fingers that ‘ Rosie ’ uses. Still more significant is the fact that she has taken this penmanship prize three years in succession.

“ ‘ Rosie ’ lost her arms three years ago. She was playing at the time on a sidewalk; with five companions she was skipping rope, shouting and laughing, when a truck went wild, careened up over the curb and blundered into the children. Two leaped to safety; two escaped with immaterial bruises, but when the bystanders picked ‘ Rosie ’ up, they found one arm severed below the elbow, the other almost gone.

“ She was rushed to a hospital, where surgeons and nurses worked hard to save her life. For fifty-two days she remained in the hospital. ‘ My arms will grow again, won’t they, doctor?’ she kept asking.

“ ‘ Rosie ’ was seven years old at the time. She

left the hospital, was fitted out with specially constructed artificial arms, hands and fingers, and went back to school. Now, at the age of eleven, she is a penmanship 'shark.' Not only can she write; she can feed herself, dress herself, and is even thinking of taking up knitting."

What a wonderful story! and what an encouraging story to you who have the arms, hands and fingers that God gave to you. When you face handicaps, and say, "Well of course I can not do such and such because ——" recall "Rosie" who might have said, "Of course I can never write well," but who did not say so.

And, too, do not forget what it means that she spent nearly eight weeks in a hospital and yet won the nickname of "Rosie Sunshine." If, under her conditions, she could win that name, how about you?

32

RALPH DE PALMA

ONE of the great automobile races of this country and of the world is held every year at Indianapolis, the capital of Indiana. When it was held in the year 1912 it was easily expected that a man named Ralph de Palma might win, for he was undoubtedly the best racing-car driver at that time. The race was several hundred miles

long, and it is a frightful experience to travel as fast as one can for so long a time, the average speed being faster than that of the average express train. It is dangerous sport, and every year lives are lost in automobile racing.

In this race of 1912 Ralph de Palma had an excellent chance to win, and as the miles kept rolling off, his chances of winning increased. When there were only five miles more to go, he was leading all the contestants, and the winning prize was almost in his grasp. But then something happened to his engine. His mechanic jumped out instantly to locate the trouble, and to repair it or patch it up so that de Palma might drive on those five short miles to the victory that was so nearly his. He soon found the trouble, but it was impossible to repair it or to even patch it up to last five minutes more; and de Palma and his mechanic pushed the car off to the side so as not to be in the way of the other cars. And as they did so, the first one rushed by to become the winner five miles further on; to win, what de Palma lost, the glory and triumph of the victory, and the money prize of \$35,000. It was a bitter loss and a keen disappointment.

What did de Palma do, when he learned that the engine could not be repaired and that the race was lost when victory was so near? He looked up, and *smiled*. Yes, he actually looked up and smiled!

*"It is easy enough to be pleasant
When life rolls along like a song,
But the man worth while is the one who can
smile
When everything goes dead wrong."*

Ralph de Palma smiled!

33

THE WHEELBARROW

ONE of the greatest and most interesting of all men was Leonardo da Vinci, who lived in Italy about the same time Columbus did. He painted some of the world's greatest pictures, he carved some excellent pieces of statuary, he designed some unusual buildings, he served as military engineer for the Duke of Romagna, he was deeply versed in scientific matters, and—he invented the wheelbarrow. Yes, that humble vehicle was invented by a great painter who was also a great and versatile genius; and many and many a man owes him a debt of gratitude for this humble invention which has simplified and made easier so much back-yard work. Here is a pile of dirt that should be transferred from one part of the yard to another. What a long and back-breaking task it would be if all had to be carried by shovelfuls or in a basket; and how much easier it becomes with the aid of the wheelbarrow.

There is only one objection to the wheelbarrow, and that is that it will do nothing of itself; it always requires some one to push it. Of course that can not be helped. You would hardly expect to find a wheelbarrow that was capable of lifting the dirt into itself, carrying it over to where you wanted it, emptying it out, going back for another load, and keeping on until the task was finished, and then putting itself back in the garage or tool house. That would be perfectly delightful, though you never expect to see a wheelbarrow like that. But, forgetting that, we are grateful for da Vinci's invention, even though it requires a man to push it.

That is all very well for a wheelbarrow, but how about boys and girls? There are plenty of them who are as useful as a wheelbarrow (and much handsomer), but unfortunately they always have to have some one to push them. They never get up in the morning unless they are called and called. They never study their lessons unless mother keeps right at them; and often it takes both father and mother to make them practice on the piano. They never go to school, they are shoved there; and they never brush their teeth until compelled to.

That may be all right for a wheelbarrow, but not for a boy or girl. A wheelbarrow does not know any better, and is made that way. People are different from wheelbarrows.

34

THE PHOENIX

THE phoenix is a bird, but it is different from the birds with which you are familiar, because it is a mythical bird. That means that a long time ago people used to believe that there was such a bird, but now they know that there is not and undoubtedly never was such a creature. There was a story about this bird that at one time was believed by every one, and that was that it never died, or at least that it kept right on living, which, as you will see, was not quite the same thing. There were several versions of this story, but the commonest was that when the old bird felt that it was about to die, it would build a pyre of very sweet-smelling wood, sit on it and set it on fire. After it had thus burned itself to death, a new and young phoenix rose out of the ashes, and thus the phoenix kept on living.

There is another story also, which is not so well known. This was told by the Jews, who said that of course there were a pair of phoenixes in Noah's ark, because there were two of every animal and bird and creeping thing in that vessel. Now the ark must have been a very noisy place, especially just before feeding time; even worse than a zoo because it contained so many more animals, and they were in such close quarters. Noah noticed

that the phœnixes never made any noise, and he asked them why they were so quiet. Their answer was: "The noise in the ark must be very hard on your nerves. We can not do anything to stop it, but at least we can be quiet ourselves and so make the noise that much less."

Naturally this thoughtful considerateness pleased Noah very much, and he decided that these birds should have some suitable reward. And he told them that after they left the ark he would endow them with never-ending life. That, said the Jews, is the reason why the other story is true. (But if these were true, why is it that there are no phœnixes in the world to-day?)

It was certainly a fine thing that the phœnixes were said to have done, and it can be easily copied. Children often talk too much in Sunday School and you can not stop them, but at least you can make the talking less by one, yourself. You can not clean up the streets or lawns or roadsides, but you can put in your pocket the paper that will keep the street, lawn or roadside that much less littered. And it is just as valuable, though it may not be as spectacular, to make things better by not doing as by doing. It may not bring the reward of immortal life, but it will bring the greater reward of a thoughtful and beautiful life.

35

JUST THE OPPOSITE

IN China people do a great many things not only differently from the way we do them, but in just the opposite way. When two people in America meet they shake each other's hands; in China each one shakes his own hand. We pay a doctor when we are sick; they pay him when they are well and punish him if they get sick or die. We like an egg to be fresh; one of their favourite dishes is an egg one hundred years old. When something puzzles us we scratch our head; the Chinaman scratches his foot. With us the dessert comes at the end of the meal; in China it begins it. We call a woman beautiful according to her face; the Chinaman judges her by her feet. They row a boat standing up and facing the direction in which they are going; we sit down with our backs to the bow. They wear white when in mourning, and we wear black. And in a great many other ways they do just the opposite from us.

We think they are queer, and so of course they think we are queer. We laugh at them, and they laugh at us; and some of their customs may be better than ours, as doubtless some of ours are better than theirs; though each thinks his own is the better and looks down on those who do just the opposite.

God probably looks at many things we do and is puzzled, because they are just the opposite from the way He thinks they ought to be done; and of course He always knows which is the best way. An American may say that the Chinaman does not know any better, so we must excuse him, but God says, "A Christian boy should know better because I sent My Son Jesus in order that he might know the right way." So He becomes sad and not amused when He sees a boy who cheats, or a girl who lies; when He sees one who can not keep his temper in or who will not help others; because He says: "That is just the opposite from what I wish, and what I taught them through Jesus Christ."

36

"THERE NOW!"

THERE are a good many phrases and ejaculations used by people, when they wish to express themselves with emphasis. Some of them are not very nice to hear, and often when we think about breaking our bad habits, we will do well to think of some phrases that we should cease using. But here is one which we will do well to make a habit of using. It is short, expressive, composed of very simple words, and excellent to use: "There now!" It is to be used especially after we have

done something, chiefly something hard or disagreeable.

A little boy was learning to dress himself. He was succeeding nicely, but still had to have his mother tie his shoe laces; but one day he tried it himself. To his surprise and his delight he accomplished it; and when he had finished it he straightened up and said gleefully, “ There now! ”

Sometimes the new piece on the piano is not very hard, except for a few bars which are difficult. You practice them often, but every time you play the piece through you stumble over them; until one day you play it all through successfully. Then you rise from the piano stool with a very merry “ There now! ”

Almost every week you are late to Sunday School, or every day you have to be called twice (or at least twice) in the morning, but one day you hurry and arrive on time, and on another day you leap out of bed at the first call; and you accomplish each with a very happy “ There now! ” to top off with.

Another day something or somebody makes you angry, and as usual you are going to say something that no self-respecting boy or girl should ever say; but also something rises up within you to choke off that “ something,” and you do not say it. You walk off with a very victorious, “ There now! ” realizing that you have not said what you might have said.

Such uses of "There now!" give a most satisfying feeling of triumph and of happiness; and each time it is used one is made stronger to fight the next time.

37

SPORTSMANSHIP

"SPORT" is a word often used as a shorter form of the word "Sportsman," and we use it in many different ways. There are in particular three kinds of "sports."

There is the man we call a "cheap sport." He is the kind of man who likes to wear clothes that we term "loud," who paints his automobile in startling colours and writes sentences on it (as he does also on his slicker), and who, in brief, wishes to make himself glaringly conspicuous. He considers himself "smart," but seldom if ever knows that others do not agree with his own opinion of himself and that they dismiss consideration of him with the contemptuous phrase: "He is a cheap sport."

Then there are others who are called "tin horn sports." They too wish to be conspicuous, but they are more inclined to be heard than to be seen, and a raucous and noisy tin horn is the symbol of their desire to have attention called to themselves. They blow horns and cheer and shout at athletic

games, and when they are older at political meetings, and you always know when they are around because they make so much noise. But they never *do* anything; they never help the team to win or the candidate to be elected. They just make a noise about it, but they are of no value, and others dismiss them with the contemptuous phrase of "tin horn sports."

The third kind call themselves sportsmen, but others call them "game hog sports." They delight to hunt and fish, but they often shoot more game and bring in more fish than the law allows, and care not one whit that by so doing they are depriving others of the opportunities for game that they wish for themselves. They boast of the size of their bag, and dearly love to have their pictures taken beside it. Nobody cares much for them, and they are more inclined to be very much disliked as "game hog sports."

The last type is the one we call a "good sport," and few people are more liked than he. Whether he is playing an important or an unimportant game, whether he is winning or losing, he has two prime aims. One is to play the game to the very best of his ability. The other is to play it as fairly and honestly as possible. He would far rather lose a game while playing fairly than win a game by playing unfairly. Here is a good illustration of it: "A high-school boy in a swimming race to decide the championship of his district was

leading as he reached the end of the pool and made his turn to complete the last lap. In making the turn he failed to touch the wall and, noticing his failure, he turned and touched it before going on. The delay resulted in his opponent passing him and winning the race.

“That evening as he told the story to his parents, his mother, thoughtless as parents frequently are about these very vital matters when their child’s success is at stake, said, ‘What did you go back for? Why didn’t you go on? Perhaps the official would not have noticed it.’ The boy replied quick as a flash: ‘But, Mother, you would not want me to win a race that way, would you?’”

There are few finer people in the world than the “good sport,” who is always, always fair, clean and honest.

38

SELF-REGISTERING HENS

IF a man owns a large number of hens, and is making his living chiefly from selling their eggs, he naturally wishes to know which of his hens are the best layers. He also kills the hens to sell, and he does not wish to kill those which are laying the most eggs. And yet he can not spend his time watching them, to see which lay the oftenest; and even if he could it is not easy to tell the different

hens apart, especially when you have a large number of them. So a way has been invented whereby the hens themselves can make a record every time they lay an egg.

Just above the foot of the hen, at what we would call the ankle, a piece of coloured chalk is fastened, with its point toward the ground but not quite touching it. Then the openings into the nesting places are made a little lower at the top so that the hen has to "duck" when she wishes to enter; and by so doing she brings the point of the chalk to the ground or sill and a mark is made. By giving each hen a different coloured chalk, and if there are not enough colours to go around presumably two pieces of chalk might be fastened to the leg, the owner of the fowls can readily tell, by the number and colour of the marks, just which hens are going into the nesting boxes most frequently and consequently are laying the most eggs. These hens save their lives, while the owner kills for market those whose marks are not found on the sills.

So, all unknown to themselves, the hens are daily telling the poultry man, just what they are doing with their lives each day, and day after day.

Even wild animals leave their history behind them, especially in the winter when it is so easily read on the snow. Here it looked into a hollow log for something to eat; there it jumped over a fallen tree. In this place it lapped from the brook, and

in that place it sprang to catch some beetle or mouse. And in this last place its writing stops, but the few feathers of a bird tell us as plainly as if we had seen the act itself, that a hawk or owl had pounced on it, and somewhere not far off was enjoying its dinner.

Even children leave frequent and legible tracks and traces, showing how they are living—here smiles and there frowns; here happiness, there disappointments—just as truly as burglars leave finger prints or hens mark the sills.

39

WHEN RUNNING

WHEN the automobile was still in its infancy and it did not have as many conveniences as it has to-day, the lights went out as soon as the engine ceased running. When you were driving you had lights; but when you wanted to park, you had to get out and light kerosene lamps. It is very much more convenient to have lights that shine whether the engine is running or not.

Many children are like the old automobile lights; they shine when the engine is running. This may not be very clear, but it can be illustrated in two ways:

1. "Is some one looking?" Many there are who shine beautifully when that engine is running.

If mother is near their behaviour is excellent; when teacher's back is not turned, they are as good in deportment as any one in the school. But let the backs be turned and—their goodness goes out like the lamps. It is a nuisance in the automobile; it is cowardice in the child.

2. "Will I get some reward?" This is another running-engine. Some children must be paid for every task, for every kindness. Like those who will not join the Scouts because they are not supposed to take a tip for "doing a good turn"; like those who always ask, "What will you give me?" when asked to do a little chore; like those who are especially good before Christmas that they may be well remembered on December twenty-fifth; like those who will not take the disagreeable medicine unless mother promises them a penny or a piece of candy, their willingness to help dies out when this engine stops running. It is a nuisance in the automobile; it is selfishness in the child.

A twentieth century child ought to be as up-to-date as a twentieth century automobile (and this is as true of a humble Ford as of a more superb Rolls Royce), and ought always to shine out in goodness and in kindness, whether the engine is running or not. In fact the automobile lights shine a little brighter when the car is parked than when it is going, because in the latter case it has all the electricity to itself. That, then, is a still higher goal for you: not only to shine when the engine is

running, but to shine a little more brightly when it is not running.

40

ECHO

IT has been said that a certain boy, who heard his echo for the first time, was surprised, and a little angered because this invisible person could never say anything original, but always said the same thing that he did. This was probably not some one certain boy, but has been the experience of almost every boy or girl who first heard an echo. As we grow older we understand it perfectly. We know that it is not another person talking back to us, but it is Nature repeating what we said. An echo can never proclaim anything except what it hears; it gives back just what we give it, and absolutely nothing else.

And so does *everything*. Jesus put it in this way: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Everything and everybody, and to a slightly lesser degree even your mother and God, give you what you give them. If you give the roadside your red chewing gum papers and your luncheon remains, the roadside gives you a very unsightly and ugly thing to look at. If you give the woods and pastures a ruthless tearing up of all the flowers you see, the woods

and pastures soon give you back a flowerless scenery. If you give the birds all the bullets you have, Nature gives you back no birds at all, but if you give the birds your protection, the birds give you back their beautiful colouring, their sweet songs and their useful insect-destroying lives. If you give school your best efforts and your faithful study, school gives back to you high marks and great contentment. If you give the piano your daily practice, the piano gives back to you ability to play with ease, but if you give it nothing it gives nothing to you—just like Echo. If you give other people kind words, honest conduct and a friendly disposition, other people will give you exactly the same treatment. Whenever you have to complain of other people's disagreeableness or harshness, stop and ask if perchance they are not giving you only what you have given them; for few people give crossness unless they have just received crossness, and still fewer people give kindness in return for crossness.

Echo, therefore, is only the name of Nature and things and people—of everything; and all, all depends on you. Hear Jesus' words again: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," and therefore "do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you."

41

TRUSTWORTHY

ONCE upon a time there reigned a king whose name was Jehoash; and you can tell by his name that he was a Biblical king. He ruled over Judah, the capital of which was Jerusalem. He was, on the whole, a good king, for he did "that which was right in the sight of the Lord all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him"; but he had one fault in not totally destroying the "high places," which means the altars to other gods than Jehovah.

The chief event of his reign was the repairing of "the house of the Lord." Nothing had been done to it for many years, and there seemed to be little money to do with, for all the contributions that the people made went to the priests. But Jehoash put at least a temporary stop to this by ordering that all the money for a certain time should be set aside to "repair the breaches of the house"; that is, wherever a plank was decaying, or a door was falling off its hinge, or the roof was leaking, or a curtain was torn or moth-eaten, or the altar was falling apart, it should be repaired.

Naturally the priests were not anxious to lose their own income, but they consented to forego it for a while at the king's command and for the good of the Lord's house. Therefore Jehoiada took

a box and bored a hole in the top. This he set on one side of the altar, and into it the priests put all the money which they received from the people who paid their dues or brought free-will offerings. When the box had accumulated what seemed a sufficient amount the king's secretary came and took it out, counted it, and placed it in a bag. (Presumably a bag was used as being easier to carry around.) Then he turned over this bag of money to the men who were to have charge of the repair work, and they in turn paid the carpenters and masons and stone-cutters, who did the actual work.

Then follows the last statement concerning the whole transaction: "Moreover they (the king's secretary and his assistants) reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: *for they dealt faithfully.*" Could higher praise be given to men than that they could be trusted absolutely, "for they dealt faithfully." They were trustworthy; worthy of trust, because they could be trusted. No greater praise can come to any man than is contained in the single word, Trustworthy.

42

THE INSIDE

ONCE upon a time there was a man who ate yeast for his health, taking several cakes each day. One summer he spent his vacation in the

woods, where there were no stores and he had to forego the yeast. But one day he walked into town ten miles away, and while there he bought half a dozen cakes. On his return to camp he took one of them out of his pocket, intending to eat it while walking. It was as neat and nice looking as a cake of yeast always is; clean and shining in its smooth tinfoil wrapper. This he undid, and to his sorrow found that the yeast within was old and mouldy. He promptly covered it over again and threw it far into the bushes beside the road, disappointed, but glad that he had other cakes in his coat. So he took out another, and went through the same simple process; and with the same result. That one too was mouldy, and was thrown into the bushes. And so it was with all the six. Neat and attractive as each one appeared on the outside, it was worthless within. This also sometimes happens with such fruits as nuts and melons and bananas; fair without but foul within.

Jesus once spoke rather harshly to men whose lives were like the yeast cakes. He said they were like their own custom, which was to be very particular that the outsides of their eating utensils were clean, but were not particular about the insides. And while it is a good thing to have the outside clean, every one knows that the cleanliness of the inside of a cup or a pot or a pan is of vastly more importance.

When a boy is being hired, a wise employer will

note whether the boy is neat and clean, whether his hair is brushed and his shoes are shined. A wiser employer will try to go deeper, and find out if the boy is clean and honest underneath his outer appearance. Once upon a time a young man moved to another town and soon afterwards married the handsomest girl in the town. Were all the other young men envious? No, they were not; they all said, "Poor fellow." They admitted that she was handsome, but they also knew, having been acquainted with her longer, that she was vain, selfish and disagreeable. Therefore they felt sorry for the young man, as doubtless he later felt sorry for himself.

Long, long ago (to be exact, when Saul was still King of Israel), people learned the truth of this in a famous saying, that "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." And what God sees is the truest, for He sees what we are and not merely what we appear to be.

43

POWER

NOT only does every child know the story of Aladdin's Lamp, but who has not envied the lad his possession, and the ability to obtain whatever he wished by the simple method of rubbing an old lamp? Or who would not wish to be able to

say, "Open, Sesame" to any door that otherwise remained locked, assured that it would fly open on the pronouncement of these two words? If we had a goose that laid golden eggs we would surely not cut off her head; neither would we lose or sell or barter away such a lamp. These stories of magic power appeal to us mightily; but we realize that they are only found in books, and that in real life the only way to success is by persevering toil and hard work. That is a truth we should (and generally do) learn early in life.

But do we also learn that after all the stories in the books are partly true? We may not have a lamp or a word or a goose that will enable us to fulfill our dearest desires, yet nevertheless we do have something that is almost as good. It also has an advantage over the other three in that we can not lose it. The lamp was lost; the magic words were forgotten; and the wonderful goose was beheaded, and would eventually have died of some other cause, for no goose is immortal. What this unlosable, unforgettable and unkillable power is comes out in the following story, which some time you may read, or act in, for it is a play.

A boy is trying to learn the multiplication table, and he is finding it very difficult. (He is not the only boy, or girl, who has found mathematics difficult, is he?) After trying for a while he suddenly pushes the book away from him and cries out, "I can't! I can't!" Then he sees some

funny little creatures dancing around on his book, not keeping still for an instant. When he asks them who they are they reply that their names are written on them and ask him if he can not read.

“No, I can’t,” answers the boy, “you whirl so fast. Please stop, just for a minute, while I read your names.”

But they tell him that they have been enchanted by an old wizard, who makes them whirl and dance and turn all the time. “Nobody can know us,” says one of them, “unless he speaks the two magic words.” But they refuse to tell the boy what the two magic words are; and when the boy petulantly says, “You’re horrid,” “I won’t!” and “I can’t!” each time their only answer is, “Those aren’t the words; those aren’t the words,” all the while never ceasing to whirl and dance and turn.

When they taunt him by saying, “You can’t find the magic words; you can’t find the magic words,” he finally rises from his chair and fairly shouts out, “I will! I will!” Instantly the figures cease their dancing and whirling, and falling limply on the table say meekly: “You’ve found them; you’ve found them.”

The boy understood, and he pulled his book toward him again, and proceeded to master the multiplication table thoroughly; all because he had learned the magic words, “I will! I will!” And in learning those simple words, he had acquired the power greater for success and happiness than

Aladdin's lamp, the "Open, Sesame" or the goose that laid the golden eggs; yes, a power greater than all three of those put together, and a power which nothing can destroy and which nothing can resist.

44

A BAR OF IRON

HERE is a plain bar of iron. It came, as you know, from the earth, in the shape of ore, which is a mixture of many elements. It was then taken to a mill where the iron was separated from the rest, and it was moulded into this handy form. In this form much may be done with it; and let us imagine that three things are going to be made, a horseshoe, a needle and a watch spring. If, now, we imagine that we have three pieces of iron instead of one, we can think of one bar being made into horseshoes, the second into needles and the third into watch springs. As horseshoes are the largest of these three, naturally there will be fewer of them made out of the bar of iron than needles or watch springs. But, furthermore, needles and springs are of steel, and steel is made of iron through a long and complicated process. So when the three bars have been made into these useful articles we will not only have more needles and watch springs than we have horseshoes, but the result will be that the horseshoes will be worth, let

us say, about five dollars, and the needles will be worth several hundred dollars. As there are so many more of the steel articles than of the horse-shoes, this may seem natural; but remember that all three articles are made from three identical bars of iron. It hardly seems possible that the three could result in such a difference; in value from \$5.00 to perhaps \$500,000. The difference is due entirely to the amount of work that is required to make them into the different articles. It requires but a little fire and a little hammering to make a horseshoe; and it requires still more—a great, great deal more—fire and hammering and drawing to make a watch spring. It is always the work and the effort and the skill that increase the value of anything. A plain wooden box costs less than a carved and ornamental table, because it takes so much more time and labour and skill to make the table than the box. A brick is worth more than a piece of clay of the same size and shape because it has to be baked and dried in the fire. One reason why Mr. Paderewski is a greater piano player than you are is because he is older and has spent years in preparing himself; and even now he still practices six hours a day.

One of the biggest mistakes that can be made is to assume that anything of value can be made without time and labour and energy; and this applies as well to character as to watch springs and tables and bricks and piano playing.

45

KEEPING

THERE are few things we all enjoy more than owning a thing. When something particularly fine is given us and it seems too good to be true that it is really for us, in our amazement and uncertainty, we often ask, "May I keep it?" That is, is it really mine, to keep? And how happy we are when the answer is "Yes." Think what Christmas would be like if all that was given us was loaned, just for the day. One of the joys of Christmas lies in our being able to *keep* what we receive; and certainly few of us would pay money for anything if we were not going to be able to keep it.

Of course life is also full of things that we may be able to enjoy but can not or may not keep. A book taken from the public library we may thoroughly enjoy, but we may not keep it; it must be returned. Good weather comes, and it also goes. We can not keep it; and in this case we must learn to enjoy it while it is with us.

And, thirdly, there are things we ought to keep but often do not. Any one can think of a great many things that come into this class, such as to keep clean, keep honest, keep Christmas, etc. Once upon a time (see I Kings 20: 40) a soldier was given a prisoner to guard. Later his officer

came to get the prisoner, but the soldier had to admit that he did not know where he was, and his only excuse was: "As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." That was a very poor excuse, for it was his first duty to *keep* that prisoner and not let him escape. Better to die trying to keep him than to lose him in that careless way.

There is one particular thing we ought always to keep as faithfully as this soldier should have kept the prisoner. It is very easy to lose, and every time it is lost there is trouble somewhere. Often—oh, so very often—when lost it brings floods of tears and oceans of unhappiness; and sometimes it breaks up homes, and not seldom it causes murder. Almost every one has it, and it is one's first duty to *keep* it, not lose it. No one else wants it; God loves it when it is kept and is very sorry when it is lost; and the person who has it is most unhappy when it is lost and brave and happy when it is kept. Its name is Temper. *Keep* your temper!

46

GYGES

G YGES was King of a country called Lydia, in Asia Minor, about 650 years before Christ. According to a very famous philosopher named

Plato, he began life as a shepherd. One day there was a prodigious earthquake, and a great rent was made in a part of the ground, near where Gyges pastured his flock. When he saw it, he was amazed, and he went down into it, where he saw many wonders. Among other things he saw the dead body of a man, larger than any he had ever seen alive. It had nothing on, but a gold ring on one of the fingers. Gyges took this off and came up again. A little while after this there was held a convention of shepherds to make ready their customary report to the king concerning anything that related to their flocks. Gyges attended wearing the ring. While he sat there, he turned the ring around on his finger, as many a man and woman has done since when bored or idle. And lo and behold! when the stone was on the inside of his finger, toward the palm, he himself became invisible to those who sat by him, and he heard them talk of him as if he were absent; but when the stone was on the outside of his finger, which is the normal position when wearing a ring, he was again made visible. By means of this power of being visible or invisible at will, by the mere turning of the ring on his finger, Gyges finally made himself King of Lydia (although Plato does not tell us just how the power of the ring enabled him to rise from shepherd to sovereign, except that the murder of the former King was involved in it).

Although this power is rare, so rare in fact that

you have never heard of another case, yet the animals have a power something like it, which is called Protective Colouring or Camouflage. It is accomplished by being so much like their background or like the ground on which they stand that they can not be distinguished from them, and so are not seen. A tiger's stripes and a leopard's spots help in this way; and so do the brownish shades of young partridges.

It would undoubtedly be great fun to have this power. What amusement you could have with your playmates and what fun you could have with parents and teachers. But it is not permitted us to have this power, and perhaps it is just as well that it is not; for it reminds us that we should never do what we wish hidden or unseen, and it makes us glad that the good we do can be seen of others.

47

PERCY

PERCY is still living, has always lived, and always will live as long as there are men and women living on this earth. And no man has ever lived who has done so many great and wonderful things as he has; or, to be more exact, it should be said that he has assisted in the accomplishment of everything worth while that has ever been done in

this world or ever will be done. He is a hard worker, but sometimes people do not like him because he is such a slow worker; and it will have to be confessed that he not only does not hurry, but that if you did hurry him you would undoubtedly kill him. No, not kill him, for he is immortal; but you would drive him away never to come back.

He came to America with Columbus, having been a close friend of his for many years. He also sailed across the Atlantic again in the "Mayflower," having been a friend of the Pilgrim Fathers all through their years' residences in both England and Holland, and was particularly loved by them after they settled at Plymouth. He was with George Washington all through the Revolutionary War, following him wherever he went—though "following" is not the right word, because he was close to his side; and it is utterly impossible for us to imagine Washington's winning the war without him. He spent many years with Peary before he finally reached the North Pole, without whom he too would not have attained his goal. It was he whom Bruce thought of when he saw the spider that tried so many times to spin its web across a gap, and which succeeded at length in doing so; and having thought of him, he promptly went out to win his battle with Percy's aid.

You, too, have known him at times when you had hard, long and difficult tasks to perform; and

your mother would never have made as fine a boy out of you as she has, if she had not been ably and continually assisted by Percy.

Have you guessed who he is? For he has another name just as you have; and when he uses his last name he spells his first a little differently, as well as unites his two names in one—Percy Verance, Perseverance.

48

TALKING FEET

TALKING FEET " looks like a misprint for " Walking Feet," for every one knows that we do not talk with our feet, but that we walk with them. However, it is not a misprint, as a verse from the Book of Proverbs in the Bible will prove. In the sixth chapter of that book of wise sayings, at the thirteenth verse (but only a portion of the verse), we find this, " He speaketh with his feet." So " Talking Feet " must be correct.

But what does it mean? First of all the answer is that it does not mean that a certain man had feet which could speak the way other people's mouths speak. The speech of the feet of this man was silent; and silent speech is not as unusual as you might think. Did you never see sailors on the bridge of a vessel, or Boy Scouts on a hill, waving flags to each other? You knew that the way

they placed those flags spelled out words. You called it "signalling." Yes, but what is signalling except a method of talking, and it is silent speaking; you can not hear a sound.

In the same way feet may speak, though silently, or at least without words. Almost every one's feet speak. Watch that boy walking; do you notice how he drags his feet? What does that mean? It means that he is going to some place to which he does not want to go. But now, look at him! His feet are going rapidly, he is running, he is kicking his heels up as if he were a colt just let out to pasture. That means he is going to a place where he is very glad to be. All this the boy has told us, though he did not say a word to us. He spoke to us with his feet.

Sometimes father asks his child to do something for him. He does it, but father can not tell whether he is glad to do it, or whether he is doing it most reluctantly, until he looks at his child's feet. Then he can tell, because each of us "speaketh with his feet."

49

KILLING THE DEVIL

ABOUT twenty-five miles from Albany, the capital of New York State, is the small village of New Lebanon, which is very close to the Massachusetts line, and is chiefly famous for the

Shaker community which lives on a hillside just outside. The settlement goes back to two years after the close of the American Revolutionary War, and the church then built is still standing. The Shakers were originally Quakers, who received their name from a way they had of shaking and quivering when they were attending religious services. A few miles further east and in the State of Massachusetts is the still smaller village of West Pittsfield, and, according to a rumour, it was here that the devil was caught unawares one day, and before he could escape the pious Shakers had slain him and buried him in the hollow of the hills.

Whether the Shakers still believe that the devil is dead and buried, you may have to go to New Lebanon to learn; but it is as certain as anything can be that you and I know that he is not. If the Shakers should wish to tell you that they know he was killed, you may have to agree, but you will hastily add that he must have come to life again. Should they ask you, "How do you know; did you ever see him?" you would have to confess that you never had, but neither had you (or they) ever seen God. Many things are alive which we can not see with our eyes, but which by other means we know are not dead. And we all know the devil is not dead, for do we not have to fight against so many bad and disobedient and angry and unkind forces? And who is responsible for them if not the devil, I'd like to know!

No, the devil is not dead, and furthermore the devil can not be killed.

A certain man puts out bread crumbs and sunflower seeds for the birds, and he is very much annoyed when the squirrels come to eat them. It is not that he dislikes squirrels, but that they keep the birds away; he prefers birds, and it is they who are most in need of food. Some one once said to him, "Why do you not shoot the squirrels?" and he answered, "I do not want to do that, but I throw snowballs and sticks at them so as to keep them away." That is what we may do and should do to the devil, whom we can not kill; drive him off so that he will not wish to come back.

50

AN ORCHESTRA

A NUMBER of years ago the famous Sousa's Band was giving one of its performances. Among its scores of musicians with their varying instruments was a young man who played the oboe. This resembles a clarinet and is known as a wind instrument because it has to be blown into to give forth any sound. The band was playing a somewhat complicated piece, and for some time only a few of the instruments were used, but as the piece of music called for increasing volume other instruments began to be played, until the whole band

was in action. Just before the full volume was reached, the notes on his music score told the young man that he must play a little run of notes on his oboe; but just as the time came for him to do so, it was necessary for him to sneeze. He did so, quietly suppressing it that he might not disturb the music; but by the time he had done so it was too late for him to play his little run. He only thought, "What difference does it make anyway; those little feeble notes of mine would not have been heard?" and he soon joined in the louder chorus of the whole band, and thought no more of the omission of those few notes.

After the performance Mr. Sousa sought him out, and asked him why he had not played those notes, which the music called for. The man explained about the sneeze and Mr. Sousa was satisfied; but it made the young man think. Perhaps no one either in the band or in the audience knew that he had omitted those notes, but Mr. Sousa, the leader of the band, knew, and to him the piece was not perfect without them.

There are many little things which we can all leave undone and which no one will know anything about, except the great Leader, God, but in His opinion our omission makes the whole world that much less perfect.

51

BENAIAH

BENAIAH has been called the best type of “a silent, faithful soldier.” The most interesting thing we know about him is told in one sentence, which is part of the twenty-second verse of the eleventh chapter of the first book of Chronicles: “He went down and slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day.”

Read those fourteen words again, and then see if they do not prompt you to add: “If Benaiah could do that, what can I not do?”

He slew a lion, the king of beasts, one stroke of whose mighty fore paw could kill an ox, and a man more easily. Why did not Benaiah say (in the days when they had no powerful firearms), “Who am I that can hope to kill a lion?” Probably because he already knew the meaning of the proverb, “Nothing venture, nothing have.” The animal was doubtless destroying cattle, and perhaps also human lives, so he ought to be killed. “At least I can try, and see what I can do,” thought Benaiah; and he went forth.

“But, alas, the lion has gone into a pit; how can I do anything now? If it were out in the open, that would be different.” That is what Benaiah might have said to himself; but instead he seems to have said, “That makes it harder, I admit; but

I must not give up on that account." So "he slew a lion in a pit," as many years later Israel Putnam went into the wolf's den in Connecticut and killed that animal.

"Oh, it is snowing. That makes my task still more difficult; for if I slip the lion will spring on me, and kill me." If Benaiah thought this too, he did not think it long. He had determined to kill that lion, and he did; though it was a ferocious beast, it was in a pit, and it was snowing.

If Benaiah could do that, you can

—practice on the piano though the room is cold;

—shovel off the snow though it is wet and heavy;

—run on that errand though you are tired from so much skating; and

—get up when called in the morning though warm blankets are nicer than a cold room.

"Benaiah went down and slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day."

52

WHICH MASTER?

AT about the age of sixteen a boy, whom we will call Johnny, became tired of school, and wished to go to work. It is a frequent mistake made by boys who can not understand the values of education, and who should keep on at school as long as they can. At the age of sixteen one is too

young to stop. What he wanted was to find some one for whom he could work, for whom he might be a humble employee or servant, and from whom he could earn wages. And while his father and mother were wisely urging him to continue at school, the idea of working was seldom out of his mind.

One day (or it *may* have been one night when he was asleep and dreaming; and it matters not which it was) he was walking down a road when he heard voices which came from a field behind a stone wall. Something that was said attracted his attention, so much so that he crawled over to the stone wall to hear more clearly; (which of course he should not have done. It is bad manners, and is called "eaves-dropping"). They were evidently talking about him, because he heard his name used, though how they knew him he could not understand. To the best of his knowledge and belief he did not know them nor had ever seen them before, even though there was something familiar about their faces. For, with excessive curiosity, he had looked over the wall to see them, without himself being seen. One of them was tall and pleasant-looking, and the other was short and a little gruff in manner; though he could not quite tell which of the two appealed to him most. On the whole he liked the taller of the two better; but after he had heard more of their conversation he was inclined more toward the other.

The conversation was concerning himself, and was delightfully in line with his one absorbing idea. For these two men were animatedly discussing the prospects of securing him to work for them. Each seemed to be very eager to secure him, and each was trying to show the other what special inducements he could offer. A part of their conversation, as Johnny overheard it, ran something like this:

The tall and pleasant-looking one said: "Perhaps I can not offer him as high wages as you can, not right away at least; but in my charge he will rise rapidly and finally have a share in my business."

"I am not thinking as much of the future as you are," replied the shorter one in his rather gruff voice; "I can not only offer him higher wages now, but I can assure him of also making a little more on the side. His hours will be fixed, and he will not have to work beyond the set time."

"I have no set hours for my servants," said the taller man, "I do not like a man (or boy) who watches the clock, and who can not be persuaded to stay a few minutes longer if there is something to be finished, or if there is the work of another which he might help to finish."

"Oh, I never make any of my servants do the work of another servant," said he of the gruffer voice; "each one does his own work, that's fair enough."

"I do not think so," began the tall one; but

something happened then to break off the conversation, and still unseen Johnny left the stone wall and started again down the road to home. All the way he thought over the conversation he had overheard, and at evening he asked his father about it. After a little thought his father said:

“ I know who those two men are who wanted you so much; and remember, my son, that one of them will eventually be your master. Decide to-day which one it will be, for it will be very hard to change later. The short, gruff one, who seemed to make the best offer, was Greed; and the tall, pleasant-spoken one, who offered you most in the end is Unselfishness, and he gives even more than he promises; Greed gives less.”

SERMONS FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS

THE NEW YEAR

ON New Year's Day we change our calendars. In so doing we place another date at the head of our letters, and are directly remembering the Birth of Jesus Christ in the Manger of Bethlehem. For the dates of the Old Year and of the New Year tell us how many years ago it was that He was born. But while the dates send us back to Christ, the name of the first month in the New Year has nothing to do with Christ or Christianity, but derives its name from one of the old gods of Rome.

His name was Janus, and he was nearly as important as Jupiter himself. He was two-faced, literally; he had no back-of-his-head as we have, but another face instead. He could and did face in two directions at the same time, forward and backward. He was, therefore, the god of boundaries, because he could look on both sides of the line; of doors and gates because he could see both within and without (we still continue this aspect of him by our use of the word "janitor"); and he was the especial porter or doorkeeper of heaven. For the same reason he was an excellent god for the New Year, because he could look back on the year that had just ended, as well as forward into the year that was just commencing. When pictured in

this respect his faces were not alike; one was that of an old man who saw a dying year, and the other was that of a young boy who saw a new year beginning; just as in our cartoons the Old Year is represented by an aged man and the New Year by a young boy.

We are all Januses on December 31st and January 1st, because we can not help but look both backward and forward. We look back on the Old Year with some regret, because we have neither done nor been all that we might have, and we look forward with confidence, because we hope to do better in the New Year. And so we make resolutions; which means that we resolve to do and be better this coming year than we were in the past year.

It is an excellent custom, this of making resolutions, on which a word or two of advice is appropriate. The first piece of advice is that one must not make too many of them; they are too easily broken, or forgotten. One good resolution, firmly made and held to, is far better than a dozen good ones, not so firmly made and so much more easily broken.

Another thing needed is perseverance. There are 365 or 366 days in the year. It is comparatively easy to make a resolution on the first day and to keep it on the second and third days, or even the fourth, but it certainly takes continuous perseverance to keep at it through the whole

twelve months. (And it takes still more than perseverance if one would rise right up and begin over again if by chance one has broken it. It is so easy to give up when one has once broken. Cyrus Field's Atlantic cable broke several times, but after each time he began again.)

Above all, do not try alone to keep your resolution unbroken. Never forget it in your prayers, asking God to help you keep it; and He will. He will not keep it for you, but He will help you to keep it.

54

HAVE YOU GROWN?

IN a great many homes where there are children, a certain door is reserved for measuring their heights. It is generally the inside of a closet door, where it will not show from the outside; and when the room is to be done over, father gives particular instructions that he does not wish the inside of that door painted, for to do so would be to erase all the measurements of the children. In the course of the years, the inside of that door has many lines on it, each one marked with a child's name or initials, and with the date. In that way each one can tell how much he or she has grown. They can tell whether a younger brother or sister is catching up on them, and whether they are taller

or shorter than an older brother or sister was at their age. Truly it is an interesting door, and an instructive one; and there should be one in every home where there are children. It shows growth.

Now, growth is more than in height of body, and New Year's Day is another door whereon to record another growth. We look back on a whole year just ended, and we can see way back to the last January first. Then we compare ourselves with what we are this January, and we ask ourselves, "Have I grown?" When we look at the door we only ask about our growth in one direction, that of height. We do not ask if our shoulders are broader, if our weight has increased, or if our waist has expanded. But on the door of January first, we ask the question of a great many ways of growing. Here is a brief list of some of them which are worth thinking about on January first. Have I grown in my

- Knowledge of the Bible?
- Obedience to parents?
- Respect toward older people?
- Kindness to everybody?
- Ability to hold in my temper?
- Desire to say nothing but what is true?

Any one of those, and a host of others, are worth asking at the beginning of a New Year.

If father looked at your measurement on the door and saw that you were not growing as fast as

you should, he would doubtless try to do something about it. If you look at this New Year door, and say to some, or to any one of these questions, "No, I did not grow very much last year in this way and that way," what are you going to do about it? Why, of course, you are going to make a strong resolution to so act that you will grow more in the New Year than you did in the old year. That is why New Year's is such an important day.

55

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

PRACTICALLY every mother thinks well of her own boy. She sees his faults more clearly than any one else, but she also sees his good points even more clearly. That is one of the many beautiful things about mothers. Other people are not so kindly disposed toward us; they are more inclined to see our faults too clearly and our good points not clearly enough; and after all what other people think about us is much nearer to being exact perhaps than what mother thinks of us. For mothers love us, and "love is blind" to our faults.

Abraham Lincoln lost his mother when he was seven years old, and when he was ten his father married again. So young Abe was brought up by a stepmother. This new mother was undoubtedly

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a fine woman, but nevertheless she was not the boy's own mother. If we remember that, what she said about him has an additional value. She outlived him, and this is what she said of that great, martyred President as she thought back to those days when she was bringing him up in Indiana:

"Abe was a good boy, and I can say what scarce one woman—a mother—in a thousand can say; Abe never gave me a cross word or look, and never refused in fact or appearance to do anything I requested of him . . . he was a dutiful son to me always. I had a son, John, who was raised with Abe. Both were good boys, but I must say, both now being dead, that Abe was the best boy I ever saw, or expect to see."

Thousands of books have been written about Abraham Lincoln, hundreds of excellent things have been said of him and many of them by other famous men, and dozens of statues and memorials have been raised to his memory; but no praise of him is as great as these few simple words of his stepmother, especially where she says: "Abe never gave me a cross word or look, and never refused to do anything I requested of him," and where she said he was an even finer boy than her own son.

56

GEORGE WASHINGTON

THE first President of the United States began life as a surveyor. That is one who, by means of instruments and mathematics, measures lands; and as lands cross streams, climb mountains and contain dense woods, it is not always an easy task. It requires carefulness and exactness. You yourself know that a tiny mistake at the beginning of an arithmetic example may make a very large difference in the answer. Young George Washington was always so careful and exact that if another man surveyed the same land later he found it had already been done correctly and perfectly. As one of his biographers puts it: "That his work was well done is shown by the fact that his surveys were considered of the first authority, and stand unquestioned to this day, like certain other work which he was subsequently called to do. It was part of his character, when he did anything, to do it in a lasting fashion, and it is worth while to remember that the surveys he made as a boy were the best that could be made."

He also wrote this of him when he was older: "He was a solid, square, evenly-balanced man, believing that whatever he did was worth doing well. So he farmed, as he fought and governed. . . . Whether it was breaking a horse, or reclaiming

land, or fighting Indians, or saving a state, whatever he set his hand to, that he carried through to the end. With him there was never any shadow of turning back. . . . Whether it was a treaty with England, the education of a boy, or the service of a friend, he gave it his best thought and his utmost care."

This is a comparatively easy way of doing what you have to do, carefully and completely, when it is something which you enjoy doing or when some great gain or reward will come at the end, but it is not so easy to do when it is something you dislike doing and no apparent gain will result in doing it. George Washington had the latter to do also. When he was only twenty-three years old, he accompanied the British General Braddock on an attack which he knew was being conducted in the wrong way. He advised the General against it, but the superior officer would pay no attention to this young American, who had to follow the Britisher's orders. But even there he did his very best; with the result that it was due to him, after Braddock was killed, that scores of others were saved from a like fate.

No one can imitate Washington to-day in leading the American colonies to victory, nor in being the first President of the United States, but every one can, and no one is too young to imitate him in doing whatever one has to do carefully, exactly and to the best of one's ability, and in never

stopping until the task is completed, and as perfectly completed as possible.

57

ST. PATRICK

YOU all know that St. Patrick's Day is March seventeenth, and it means orange and green pitted against each other, though to-day the latter predominates and most of you wear something of that colour. We may also know that he is said to have driven all the snakes out of Ireland. We know still further, or at least we think we know, that March seventeenth was his birthday. But it was not. He was born on either March eighth or ninth, and as those who held to these dates could come to no agreement, and could find no average of 8 and 9 without making $8\frac{1}{2}$, and whoever heard of March $8\frac{1}{2}$? they compromised by adding the two and making the 17th St. Patrick's Day.

It is said that he was born in Glasgow, Scotland, about 350 years after Christ was crucified. At the age of sixteen he was sold as a slave and carried off. Five years later he escaped and returned to Great Britain. Soon afterwards he became a Christian, and reported that he had received a call from heaven to preach the Gospel in Ireland. To Ireland therefore he went, and before dying at the advanced age of ninety he met with

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great success in converting the Irish, beside building many churches, cathedrals and monasteries. In preaching, one of his favourite illustrations, and a visible one, he found in the shamrock. It is very abundant in Ireland, and he took its three leaves as a proof of what we call the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

He lived so long ago that many miraculous stories are told, and numberless legends have crept up about him. Some have said that he was born in France or elsewhere. Some have declared that he was a Roman Catholic and others a Presbyterian. In fact the things we know about him are really much less than the things we are uncertain about. Just consider:—we do not know when his birthday was, nor where he was born, nor to what church, Protestant or Catholic, he belonged; and there are hosts of things told about him that we do not believe at all.

Over against all this (and it is of most importance), we do know that he was a fine man and excellent Christian. It is far better to know that about him—or for others to know that about us—than all the other things in the world that might be known.

58

THE FORTY DAYS

LENT is the period of about six weeks preceding Easter, and its opening day is known as Ash Wednesday. In former days men poured ashes over their heads (a very old custom) to signify their humble sorrow for their sins. To-day men are more inclined to give up something during this period. In each case they are remembering the forty days during which Jesus was tempted of the devil in the wilderness. As He did not go into the wilderness to repent of His sins but to prepare Himself for His ministry, the modern way of keeping Lent is more in accordance with His way than was the older method.

We keep Lent in order to be able to live better lives. And to strengthen our wills by denying ourselves some harmless pleasure—candy, cake, soda, gum or moving pictures—is as valuable for our lives as Jesus' experiences in the wilds of the Jordan was for His life. He gave up food and society; we give up lesser things.

In doing so one should know very definitely beforehand just what one is going to give up, and just what one means by this one thing. For example, one says, "I will drink no soda until Easter." That sounds very clear. But some evening at home hot chocolate is served, and one drinks it because

that is not soda. A few days later one is in a drug store and would like a glass of soda. But that can not be taken, according to one's Lenten resolution. Suddenly the idea flashes into the mind, "Oh, I can take a hot chocolate, because I had that at home, and it is not soda." So one drinks the hot chocolate. The next time one is in the store, one realizes that to drink hot chocolate there was practically the same thing as taking a soda; and one feels that the resolution has been broken, so one might just as well take a soda. And one does.

In the same way one should define in advance what one means by such words as: cake; is a cookie cake? candy; is milk chocolate candy? To do so is to avoid the dangers that beset one who tries to give up something during Lent. It is, or should be, a solemn and serious thing, this "swearing off" during this period. To enter into it too lightly is to court disaster long before the forty days are over. To enter into it with serious purpose and firm determination is to build and strengthen character, to imitate Jesus, and to make a happy and triumphant Easter.

59

OFF OR ON?

BECAUSE Jesus went into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, which really means that He went off by Himself with God to think over His life, and the devil came and suggested that He adopt *his* ways and not God's, men have for a long time set apart the same number of days in each year, selecting the period that ends with Easter, to which they have given the name of Lent. (It is so named because it is at the time of year when the days are beginning to *lengthen*.) They have generally used this season as a time for giving up something, in commemoration of the food that Jesus gave up when He was in the waste places near the Jordan River; just as we give gifts at Christmas because the Magi brought their gifts to the Babe and because it is the anniversary of the day when God gave His Son to the world.

On Ash Wednesday, which is the opening day of Lent, thousands of people are going to commence a form of self-denial, which is generally known as "swearing off" from some simple pleasure, until Easter. It is an excellent custom; not because we give up something that is wrong (we should not wait until Lent to do that), but because we are training ourselves in self-control; we are testing ourselves to see if we can persevere in a resolution.

There is only one thing better than giving up something during Lent, and that is to take on something; instead of swearing off, to swear on; not to say what we will not do, but to state what we shall do. For it is always better to do something good, than simply not to do something wrong; although both are excellent for building character. Of the two the "swearing on" is the better. We may even want to do both. We may decide not to eat certain things (which is the customary form of self-denial), but we may want to say: During Lent I will read some portion (perhaps it will be one chapter) of the Bible every day; or I will try to do some kindly deed to some one on each of these forty days; or I will practice my music each day without having to be told to.

What a strong and beautiful character you will have already developed in the short time until Easter if in some way or other, off or on, you have kept Lent.

60

LENT

ONCE upon a time there was said to be a farmer who could lift unusually heavy weights. He could even pick up a full-grown pig that weighed several hundred pounds. When he was asked how he could do so, he said that he had

brought that pig up from its birth. It was very easy to carry when it was young, and as it grew larger his strength grew with it, because he lifted it each day. This story is usually laughed at, but perhaps there is more truth than humour in it.

Another man (and this *is* a true story) who was over sixty years old, was told by his doctor that he should give up both coffee and tobacco. He did so, although he had long been fond of drinking the one and smoking the other. A friend asked him if he did not miss them frightfully, and if it had not been very hard to give them up. His answer was: "No, I have been fond of both of them; but, much as I enjoyed them, at least once a year I voluntarily gave them up. Now, when I am obliged to give them up permanently, I do not find it so hard, because I had been practicing it beforehand."

A third story tells of a man who suddenly bought himself a large and expensive house. The purchase surprised his friends and neighbours, for they knew him to be a man who had never made very much money. One friend dared to ask him about it, and received a reply similar to that from the man who lifted the pig and from him whose doctor's orders were so easily obeyed. "Ever since as a boy I first began to earn money," he said, "I laid aside something out of every dollar I earned. That I put carefully away in a bank, no matter how much I might have wanted to spend it; and re-

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cently, after years of doing this, with the accumulated interest, I had more than enough collected wherewith to buy this house."

All three men had done the same thing in the only way it can be done. They had done something large—lifted a pig, given up two things he delighted in, and bought a house—by slowly collecting what was necessary; in one case physical strength, in another case moral strength, and in the third case, much money.

The season of Lent, which commences on Wednesday of this week, and which has for so long been observed as a time for giving up something, has a value which these three stories illustrate and of which they show the value. The voluntary giving up of something during these forty days means the accumulation and growth of a strength of will through self-denial that enters into one's very life and character, and makes possible and easy at some later date the compulsory denial of something much larger. It is, therefore, for the good of one's very life and soul that you are urged to give up something on Ash Wednesday, and, having decided definitely what it is that you will give up, to hold out firmly and positively until Easter.

61

PALM TREES

TO-DAY is called Palm Sunday because the branches of palm trees were among the things that people waved at Jesus when He came riding into Jerusalem so many years ago. He came rather suddenly and they had to use what they could lay their hands on, and palm branches were the easiest things to secure.

The palm tree is very easy to take care of, in fact it hardly requires any care at all. It does not have to be "planted by the rivers of water," for it can grow in sandier soil than a pine tree can. It seems to require so little water that it is often called "the camel of the trees"; and yet it thrives so well that when the Psalmist wished to describe a good man he said that he flourished like the palm tree.

There is perhaps no tree in the world as useful to man in so many ways as a palm tree. In the American stock yards it is said that every part of a pig is turned into some use except the "squeal." In the Orient the palm tree has no "squeal," but every part of it is used. It gives fruit such as dates and cocoanuts, which we too are familiar with. The large leaves which we know through our palm fans are used by the natives with which to make their clothing.

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A famous historian has written that the natives of Assyria (which was east of Palestine) "celebrated, either in verse or prose, the 360 uses to which the trunk, the branches, the leaves, the juice, and the fruit were skilfully applied." Among other things it furnished oil, wine and honey (or palm tree sugar), and its tall plume of bright green leaves acts like a daytime lighthouse to guide the traveler to the oasis, at which may be found water for man and beast. They call it "the prince of the vegetable kingdom," "the blessed tree," "the sister of man." (If you wish to read of some more of its benefits to man, turn to Whittier's poem, "The Palm-Tree.")

Last of all, in the book of the Revelation the seer pictures men having arrived in heaven, and he relates that standing before God they are "clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." Truly it is a wonderful tree, but it never had a more wonderful use than on that Day when men, women and children waved its branches to honour the arrival of Jesus into Jerusalem; and to-day all churches use potted palms as the chief decoration on their pulpits.

How easy it could be for a palm tree to say, "Oh, I could grow to be a useful tree if I were only set in rich, moist soil; but what can you expect in this sand?" It does not say that; what it does say is, "I am set here in this sand, and I do not care much for it; but I will do the best I can."

And lo, it grows and flourishes, until it blesses thousands of people. Any one can flourish if he will not allow himself to say: "Oh, if conditions were only different!" You can not often change conditions, but you can make the most of yourself whatever the conditions may be.

62

HELPERS

THE great men of the world are those who have done things. They may have been soldiers like Washington and Grant, or artists like Michelangelo and Raphael, or writers like Shakespeare and Milton, or missionaries like David Livingstone and Dr. Grenfell. We render them homage for their achievements; but at the same time we must not forget that no man ever does anything all by himself. What could Washington have accomplished without the soldiers who had such a bitter winter at Valley Forge and who marched so many weary miles often pursued by the British; and what could Dr. Grenfell do single-handed in Labrador, without the many assistants who help him carry on his work?

In the railroad yards there are those mighty locomotives which pull the fast through trains, and most of us like to look at them; they are the embodiment of strength and power. But they would

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be woefully handicapped in their work were it not for the little switch engines, which do not appeal to us very much, but without whose work the larger ones would be unable to have a full train to pull. In railroad circles they are known as "helpers"; and since most of us can not be Washingtons and Grenfells and mighty engines, it is good to remember how necessary are the less conspicuous helpers. In fact, is there anything finer on earth than to help; and it is something every one can do.

A very little girl once objected to putting suet and crumbs on the window-sill for the birds when snow covered the ground and they were hard pressed for food, because she said that God would take care of even the sparrows; but her mother reminded her that while that might be true, God wished us to help Him. After that the girl in feeding the birds felt that she was also helping God. For whenever we feed the birds, or help other people, we are helping God; and every child can be a helper.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the day that we remember as Palm Sunday, the people ran out to welcome Him. They waved hats and branches, and cried out, "Hosanna;" and you may be sure that children were in that crowd, as children are always found wherever people collect. There was not much that a little child could do to add to the triumphal entry of this great Man, but every child

who waved his hat or a palm branch, was helping to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem. And there was no one's welcome that day that was more pleasing to Jesus than that of the children, just as to-day nothing is more pleasing and encouraging to Him than the sight of any boy or girl who is trying to do his part well in this world, because He knows what a helper he is to the coming of the Kingdom of God.

63

EASTER

THERE are few people in the world who do not like flowers, and who ever heard of an Easter without them? One flower is used especially, and is so much used at this time that it is now called the Easter lily. It decorates all the churches of Christendom, and it plays a part in most of the paintings or stained-glass windows of the Resurrection. Sometimes Mary is seen holding one in her hand; and we may easily assume that they were blooming in Jerusalem at the time Jesus rose from the dead. That may not be true, however, and there are other reasons why they are so prominent in our Easter observances.

One is that the flower is so white, and white is the symbol of purity, beauty and perfection; therefore it is most fitting to use it in our remembrance

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of Jesus Christ. A second reason is found in the beginning of the lily. You know that the plant grows out of a bulb, which is no more attractive than an onion, which it resembles. Furthermore this bulb is placed in the ground, sometimes in mud-like soil. Yet out of that miry soil the unattractive bulb throws out shoots which rise into the air, and at the ends of which eventually blossom forth the pure white lily.

That is one of the most wonderful things of Nature; the Easter lily coming out of a bulb placed in dirt. It is also the symbol of Easter. The dead body of Jesus was laid in the tomb; but Jesus rose from the dead; and the whole world loves to think of this, and be assured that after our deaths we shall rise to heaven, as the Easter lily comes out of the bulb which is placed in the ground.

We like also to think that we may somewhat anticipate this rising from death unto life and from bulb into lily, and do something akin to it every day. Just as it does not matter how dirty a bulb may be it may grow into a lily; so it does not matter how disagreeable a boy or girl may be, he or she may grow into a kindly and agreeable boy or girl. If one is cross at breakfast one may rise to being pleasant after breakfast. If one was rude yesterday one may be polite to-day. If one spoke harshly in the morning one may speak gently in the afternoon. If one lost a battle, one can rise out of defeat to the success of winning the next

battle. To learn this is to learn the lesson of Easter every day.

“Not,” said some one, “that we shall rise hereafter—that is not the most important thing; but that we can and may rise every day. That is the greatest thing.” And to learn so to rise, as Christ from the dead and the lily from the bulb, every day and all the time, that is indeed the greatest thing to learn at Easter.

64

IT LASTS!

IF you were asked which you would rather have, a small box of candy now or a large box of candy next week, you would be inclined to choose the small box of candy now, on the ground that “a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,” and that the present is certain and the future is most uncertain. In the same way you might prefer a box of candy to-day to a gold watch promised to you when you were twenty-one years old, because the candy appeals to you now, and the watch can not appeal to you for many years to come. But in each case you would be unwise in your selection. The larger box of candy is to be preferred to the smaller, and the watch to the other box, and partly because the watch and the larger box will last the

longest; and a large part of the value of anything is determined by how long it lasts.

Now this has much to do with Easter, because Easter comes and tells about the value of things that last. You remember that Christ told His Disciples that He was going to die, and when they expressed their sorrow over His approaching death He told them not to grieve because it was best that He go. They could not understand that, and when He died they said, "That is the end." But it was not the end. He rose from the dead, and the Disciples had Him back again. Then He had to tell them that He would only be with them forty days, when He would leave them again, and this time He would not come back. But, He added, I am going where I shall live forever; I shall *last*! Furthermore, when you die you will join me, and you too will last. "Where I am, there shall ye be also."

That is the great thing about Easter. It reminds us that death is a beginning, not an end. Christ died, but He still lives. We shall die, but we shall live. That is why life is so important, it lasts. The things that last are the most important, and the most important things are those that last longest. And you will notice if you think of it carefully, that it is the *good* things that last, and that is one reason why goodness is so much worth while. Only the good goes to heaven, and it "lives forever and ever." Therefore among the most important things

in life are doing one's lessons, practicing one's music, helping mother, telling the truth, and being kindly. They are good things; nay, they are among the best things of life; and they will last.

Easter reminds us of many things, but it can not remind us of anything more important than of that which helps us to live better here. Good things make a good character, and a good character is immortal—it lasts.

65

RESURRECTION

THERE are many birds which spend most of their time on the ground. Their food is obtained among the leaves or in the earth. How foolishly easy it could be for such birds to say that they do not need their wings, as do the much-flying swallows or the high-flying hawks. They are only a burden, so they will cut them off, letting them grow again in the fall when they wish to use them for their southward migration. In the meantime they will be caught by cats and minks, from whom they can not escape without their wings.

Something like this is often our limited idea of Resurrection. We keep Easter as a day to remind us that when we die we will rise and go to heaven, in the meantime neglecting our constant and daily need of rising. We are always falling and need-

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ing to rise again, as a horse always tries to get up after it has fallen on the icy pavement; and as the spider in the famous story of Robert Bruce tried again and again after every failure.

A tender-hearted man once said to a small boy on the ice who was forever falling down, "Sonny, you are getting all bumped up. I wouldn't stay on the ice and keep falling down so; I'd just go off and watch the others." But the boy was wiser than the man, and he answered: "I didn't get new skates to give up with; I got them to learn how with." So after every fall, he picked himself up and tried again.

Trees bow to the ground when laden with ice and snow, but they stand erect again later. A submarine dives beneath the water, but it comes to the surface again later. It may be true that "what goes up must come down"; it is also true, or ought to be true, that what goes down must come up.

One great difference between two of Jesus' Disciples lies here. Both Peter and Judas sinned against Him. Peter was sorry, and rose up to be a great apostle. Judas stayed down, and committed suicide.

It is a great thing to have Easter and to recall that when we die God will raise us from the dead. It is a still greater thing to realize that every day, after every fall and every mistake, the same God will help us to rise up and try again. The failure

in life is the man who will not rise after he has been knocked down. The success in life is not the man who is never knocked down, who never makes a mistake or takes a false step; but he is the one who ever rises after every fall. That is the daily resurrection which we all may live here and now.

66

U. S. GRANT

ULYSSES S. GRANT¹ was one of the finest and greatest men who ever lived. He was not a particularly good President, and he may or may not have been one of the greatest soldiers of all times (some students say that he was, and some say that he was not). But he was a *man*. He had his faults, as all men have; and he began life with some very bad and conspicuous ones, chief of which were his constantly running into debt and his too heavy drinking. There are some stories to the effect that he swore a great deal, but those are evidently all wrong because in older life he once said, "When a boy I seemed to have an aversion to swearing, and when I became a man I saw the folly of it. I have always noticed, too, that swearing helps to arouse a man's anger; and when a man flies into a passion, his adversary who keeps

¹ Born April 27, 1822.

cool always gets the better of him. In fact, I could never see the use of swearing.” •

But it was not his abstinence from bad language, excellent as that was, that made Grant a fine man. He did something harder than never to begin swearing. He had two very bad faults, but he overcame them. As a young man he gambled recklessly and mildly, and he drank; as an older man he gave both of them up. And it is always ever so much harder to give up what you have once started than it is not to start it at all. How almost impossible it is to stop in the middle of a hill when you are coasting down it on your sled; and how simple and easy it is to stay on the top of the hill and not start until you wish to. What damage a fire can do before the firemen after much hard work can put it out; but how easy not to start a fire by refusing to play with matches. In the same way it was easy for Grant not to swear because he never started doing so; but it was heroic for him to give up gambling and drinking after he had been doing both for many years. But he did it!

The easiest way to be good is never to start what is wrong. “Sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a habit and you reap a destiny.”

The most glorious achievement in life is to put an end to a bad habit, after it has been given in to for a long time. Do it; and “ask the Saviour to help you.”

67

STATUES

NUMBERLESS statues are found in every large city, and there is hardly any small town that does not have at least one. (If the town in which you live has none perhaps the authorities are waiting for you to grow up and distinguish yourself, when they will erect one to you.) And these statues are of all sorts and conditions of people, but always of those who in some way have made themselves worth being commemorated and remembered.

A list of all the people who have had one or more statues erected to their memory would be a very, very long one. In the United States George Washington and Abraham Lincoln have more erected to them, not only than any other two Americans, but than undoubtedly any dozen or more put together. One man once had a statue to Adam, and another man one to Eve, and of course there have been not a few statues of Jesus Christ, chief of which is the one in the Andes Mountains of South America to memorialize peace between Chile and Argentina.

The saddest monument in this country, if not in the world, is at Saratoga, New York, to commemorate the battle of that name in the Revolutionary War. On it are places for four statues, of the four generals who played such conspicuous

parts in October, 1777; but there are statues placed in only three of them. The fourth one is vacant; it should have been for Benedict Arnold, but as he later proved a traitor to the country it is not desirable to remember his valour at Saratoga.

Some day we may have moving statues, just as now we have moving pictures; and if we do a horse will no longer stand reared on his hind legs, but will gallop in to action, and a man will not keep his arm perpetually raised, but will perform some deed or complete some gesture with it.

Statues of women are also not uncommon. In Kansas City there has recently been unveiled one which includes two horses, two men and a baby, but the main figure is that of a woman. The statue is entitled and is to commemorate "The Pioneer Mother"—the wife and mother who shared with her husband the hardships of those days when men were going in to the wild and dangerously new country of the West. At Plymouth, Massachusetts, there are a number of memorials to those who arrived in the "Mayflower" and played their part in that early settlement, and among them are two to women. One is to the Pilgrim Mother and another to the Pilgrim Maid, each of whom also shared with the men the hardships of life in those first months on American soil.

But while pioneer and Pilgrim mothers have been thus remembered, there is no statue to mothers in general. There are many memorials to soldiers

and sailors, and to other types of men, but none as yet to mothers; they who endure so much and give so much, whose lives are constant outpourings of love, and who make far more sacrifices than they themselves or than any one else knows anything about.

On the other hand, mothers do have their statues, and they are living and moving statues which are at the same time their greatest joy. These statues are her own children when she is proud of them. It is a curious and wonderful thing that mothers love their children no matter what they may do, or no matter how much they may even forsake or perhaps mistreat her. What she most desires in the whole world is to be able to add to her love her admiration of her child, and to be able to feel that the child she so loves is one of whom she may be proud and whom others admire.

Mothers' Day is not merely a tribute to the world of mothers, it is also a reminder to children to be worthy of their mothers.

68

GRADUATION DAY

WE call this Commencement time, presumably because you are now going to commence another phase of your life. As you have not yet commenced that, we are more inclined to-day to

think of it as an ending time. This day proclaims that you have completed something, and that is always an achievement, a matter of which to be proud, for there are few more excellent resolves than this: "I will finish what I begin."

When Calvin Coolidge was a boy, at the age of ten, a visitor in the Coolidge home was awakened about two o'clock in the morning by the sound of some one moving about. Thinking that possibly some one was ill, she went down-stairs to investigate. In the dark she found the small boy. She asked him why he was stirring about at such an hour; and he answered: "I forgot to bring in the fire wood. I am going out now to get it." And his father once said to a friend: "Never did I give Calvin a job that he did not finish. I might have gone away and left him with the job to do, but when I came back I always found it done. I never told him twice." That is a great testimonial to receive from parent, teacher or employer.

You are to be congratulated for having finished these years at school, and even more so if you took a year longer than most, because that showed a determination that was not weakened by discouragement or ill health. And this graduation is, therefore, a Commencement of an excellent rule in life: Finish what you begin. It is not always easy, because initial enthusiasm wanes, the task often grows less interesting and more difficult, and obstacles arise that you had not foreseen.

Carry the rule also from school and chores to the building of character. Life is likened to a race, to a journey, to a warfare; and each figure proclaims a goal to be reached, an aim to be attained, a something to be finished. So the Apostle Paul saw it, and before he died he wrote these lines: "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course." Only the one who has finished a task is fitted to commence another and a higher one.

69

BUNKER HILL

THE Battle of Bunker Hill was fought June 17, 1775, and you are familiar with it. You know that it was fought on Breed's and not Bunker's Hill; that the breastworks were put up in the night, amazing the British when they woke the next morning; that the redcoats charged up the hill once, twice, and were driven back by the bullets fired by the colonists; and that the third time they succeeded in capturing the hill, but only because its occupants had run out of ammunition; and some of you have seen the tall shaft known as the Bunker Hill Monument, which now stands on the site of the battle. It is one of the very few monuments in the world that commemorates a defeat and not a victory.

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It is true that the colonists were defeated and driven off the hill only because they had nothing left with which to defend themselves; but it is still equally true that they were defeated. But before they ran down from that hill they had learned one great thing: that they were not afraid of those dazzling British redcoats, and that if they had bullets and powder enough they could always defeat them. That was a great thing to learn, because they were only farmers themselves, not accustomed to fighting, and the British army had a reputation similar to that held by the Germans in 1914, that it was invincible and irresistible. This occurrence at Bunker Hill humbled them a bit, and gave the farmer-colonists confidence in themselves, which made the Revolutionary War possible, and which cheered the heart of General George Washington, who was on his way to Boston to take command of the whole army.

It is always a great day when one finds one can do something he thought he could not do (such as to swim over one's head, or get up in the morning when first called), and each victory helps you "some other to win." Look over this list of possible Bunker Hills, and see if you can not find one or two of them where by a single victory, perhaps this very afternoon, you can have the joyful experience of learning what you can do:

Tell the truth, though you may be punished for it.

Hold your anger in, though it wants so to come out.

Say "No" when tempted to something wrong but pleasant.

Pass the orchard without going in to help yourself to fruit that is not yours.

Do cheerfully and promptly the duty you do not like.

70

THE CHURCH

WOOD is undoubtedly used more than any other material. Houses are made of wood; and so is most of the furniture which we put in our houses. Lead pencils, paper, sleds, parts of automobiles and trunks are only a few familiar articles that are largely made of wood. All wood comes from trees, and in order to obtain the wood we must cut down the trees. We are cutting them down very fast; some are destroyed by fire and some by death, and beavers gnaw down a few each year.

What is going to happen when all the trees have been destroyed? That is an important question, because the new ones grow up so slowly; they are being cut down faster than they are growing up. Consequently many people are becoming alarmed over the approaching dearth of wood, and to offset

it they are adopting and advertising the policy of reforestation. This is the policy of reforesting, or of planting trees wherever there is room for one tree, or hundreds of trees to grow; so that by the time wood might become scarce through lack of trees, these new trees will be full grown, and there will still be wood for all its uses. It is an excellent policy, and it would be well for every child, or at least every child's room in school, to plant a tree on each Arbour Day.

The Church faces the same problem. It has members and workers, just as the land has trees; but none of them will live forever; and then what will the Church do? The answer to that question, which is much more important than the same one about the using up of all the trees, is the same. The Church also is adopting the policy of reforestation. In this case we do not plant anything new, but we take the children who are growing up and we invite them to come into the Church, to grow up in the Church, and to unite with the Church on their confession of faith in Jesus Christ. In proportion as the children accept our invitation does the Church lose all fear for its future; for as the present members grow old and die, one by one their places are filled by the children who are coming on.

Did you ever stop to think that all the Church ministers and officers and members of not many years from now must come from among the chil-

dren of to-day? Let every child accept every invitation the Church gives, both for its own sake and for the sake of the future of the Church.

Without reforestation there will be no wood in years to come. Without the children's interest to-day there will be no Church in years to come.

71

INDEPENDENCE

ON July fourth, 1776, the American Colonies published their Declaration of Independence—as every American, young and old, knows. And though very few of us have ever read it all through, we are familiar with its opening paragraph: “When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the bonds which have connected them with another . . . a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.” The second paragraph is perhaps still more familiar, at least so far as its opening sentence is concerned: “We hold these truths to be self-evident—that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights: that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness ” (that is one of the world's great sentences).

It was, says the Declaration, from the King of

Great Britain that they were separating, because of the tyrannical way he had treated them; and they listed twenty-seven objections that they had to his treatment. This they signed, fifty-six representatives from the colonies, and published for all the world to see. At the same time they kept on fighting to obtain the separation and the independence which the King of Great Britain would not grant them just because they asked for it. At Yorktown, in 1781, they accomplished that for which they set out.

The Declaration of Independence is one of the world's really great papers, and behind it lay the courage, manliness and perseverance of the American Colonies.

Every boy and girl ought to have a Declaration of Independence not written and sent forth once; but lived, and set forth whenever it is necessary. It might commence something like this: "When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for me not to approve of certain things that are being done by my friends, it is only right that I should let others know why I will have nothing to do with them hereafter." It might have for its second paragraph: "I hold this to be self-evident—that every boy should be clean, honest and upright."

The rest of the paragraph would explain what those three words mean, and would speak of other boys and girls who did not so thoroughly believe

in them and who therefore must not be held to as friends and playmates. This would be followed by twenty-seven (more or less) objections. Some of these might be:

“They use language which they would not wish their parents to hear.”

“They are underhanded in many of their methods, especially at school.”

“They tell deliberate falsehoods in order to extricate themselves from trouble or punishment.”

“They are shiftless in their work, and are not to be trusted in their play.”

Such a Declaration of Independence would make any boy or girl as great as the document of 1776 has made the United States of America.

72

HALLOWE'EN

ONCE upon a time a professor in a college, while drawing some problem on the black-board and with his back turned to his scholars, was aware of paper wads and arrows that were flying through the air. He turned and saw who was throwing these missiles. Removing his eye-glasses, he said to them in a dignified manner, “A gentleman is one who never wilfully annoys another.” There was silence for a minute; then

the professor returned to his work on the black-board. But no more missiles were thrown.

It is an excellent definition of a gentleman, and the boys only needed to be reminded of it, to live up to it. It differs only in its wording from the one that Jesus gave to all men when He said, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

It is especially worth remembering on Hallowe'en, in order to keep you from doing what later you will be sorry you did. Pranks and good fun are the order of that evening, and few object to your indulging in them, provided only you stop with the definitions of Christ and of the professor. That means that one will not destroy any property, rub soap on houses and automobiles because in many cases it can not be erased, or indulge in anything but gentlemanly fun, the kind of fun you would not mind having played upon you.

Every Hallowe'en night three boys (or it might be three girls) go to bed in different moods. One is thoroughly frightened. He has engaged in some prank that now he knows he should have kept out of. It caused some damage; and as he fears he is known to have been one of the perpetrators of it, he has visions of some dire punishment; and therefore he goes to sleep (which takes him a long time) in a thoroughly frightened condition; and he wakes the next morning equally frightened.

The second boy (or girl) goes to bed in an

equally ashamed condition. He too has done something that now he wishes he had not done. He has not been detected, and he fears no punishment, but he suffers that painful experience of wishing he had not done that of which he is now ashamed. He too takes longer than usual to go to sleep, but when he wakes the next morning he rises with a new determination not to do again that of which he will be ashamed later.

The third boy (or girl) goes to bed with a clear conscience; he has done nothing that causes fear or shame. He is proud of himself, that he has not done what the others did; sleep comes to him quickly; and he rises the next morning a happy boy.

To enjoy November first one must be a gentleman on Hallowe'en.

73

“ THANK YOU ”

IT would be hard to find any words which can be used together that are finer than these, “ Thank you.” (In a more courtly fashion they are sometimes extended to, “ I thank you,” and in a more hasty way are shortened to “ Thanks.”) They please every one to whom they are addressed, and life is full of so many ways of using them, that it is a little surprising that they are not used

oftener. Perhaps it is because the one who might use them forgets how pleasant they are to the one who might hear them. One great reason why we like to hear them is an unselfish one. We are not so much anxious to hear them because they please or tickle us, as we are because we are so glad that the other one wants to say them.

Sometimes a man gives his seat in a trolley car to a woman, and she never says, "Thank you." Perhaps afterwards he is sorry he gave it to her if she is not appreciative enough to tell him so in these brief words. He deserved the seat more than she did under those circumstances of ingratitude.

In England when you have given your dinner order to a waiter, he never goes off to the kitchen to fill it without first saying, "Thank you." He is grateful for your order. President Roosevelt always stopped at the locomotive after a train ride to thank the engineer for his important part in bringing him to his destination.

Yes, there are no two words that spread or sprinkle so much good feeling and such a heart-tickling sensation as these. We ought to use them oftener; to do so is to be like a flower-girl who strews flowers along the path of the bride as she marches to the altar.

If these two words please men, they also please God. He loves to hear them said to Him. He hears so many, "Please, won't you do this?" and, "Won't you give me that?" that He is particu-

larly happy when some one turns around and says, "Thank you," just as Jesus was happy when one of the ten lepers He had healed "turned back and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks."

Thanksgiving Day is not merely a time for an extra dinner. Neither is it a time to do all the thanking for the 365 days of the year. It is the day to remind us to say, "Thank you" a little oftener to God and to men. And to say, "Thank you" to men is also one way (though not the only way) of saying, "Thank you" to God.

74

THE BOSTON TEA PARTY

ON Thursday, December 16th, 1773, occurred what is now known as the Boston Tea Party, an event in our history which showed what the Americans thought about the attitude of Great Britain toward them, and which marked another step forward in those rapidly progressing days which culminated in the American Revolutionary War, and which is known to every American child. The tax on tea was not to be borne by those whose rallying cry was, "No taxation without representation." A meeting was held in the Old South Meeting House (or Church) in the city of Boston,

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where, as so often happens, words and words, arguments and discussion led the colonists nowhere.

But two remarks did bear fruit. One was by a man named John Rowe, who asked (though he did not expect an answer, at least not in words): "Who knows how tea will mingle with salt water?" The other was by Samuel Adams, who, in what amounted to a motion to adjourn the meeting, said: "This meeting can do nothing more to save the country." Very soon afterwards a war-whoop was heard outside, and fifty Americans in the guise of Mohawk Indians passed down the street, and they are next seen at Griffin's wharf. What happened next is the famous Boston Tea Party, when the tea on which they refused to pay what they considered the unjust tax was cast into the waters of the harbour.

(One of these disguised Indians, by the name of David Kennison, fought all through the Revolutionary War, enlisted in the War of 1812 although he was by then over seventy-five years of age, narrowly escaped death in the Fort Dearborn massacre on August 15th of that same year, had his skull crushed by a falling tree, at various times broke a collar bone, two ribs, both legs and his forehead, was married four times and became the father of twenty-two children, and finally died at the age of 115. The approximate site of his grave is marked by a boulder and tablet in Lincoln Park, Chicago. It is passed daily by thousands of auto-

mobilists, very few of whom ever realize how near they are to the remains of one who so long ago helped play an important part in the early history of the United States.) .

To come back to the Party itself. Undoubtedly it was not quite right for these men to have thrown this property overboard, and naturally the British were furiously incensed over it. They called it an "outrage," a "riot," and by still more terrible names; but at the same time it is well to recall that the act was done quietly (save for that initial war-whoop), decorously, almost reverently, and that no one was injured in any way. It may have been an "outrage," but the British were not correct when they called it a "riot." Back of it lay one great motive; an intense enthusiasm for the cause in which they believed. Perchance they quoted to themselves the words of Christ: "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; " and the tea which was to be taxed was the "right hand " in this case.

So it is that we admire them, and are proud of their ultimate success. Enthusiasm always helps a cause more than anything else, and without it not very much can be accomplished. Without enthusiasm Columbus could never have discovered America or the Pilgrims have landed at Provincetown. Without enthusiasm Paul would have been only a half-hearted Christian of whom we would never have heard because he would have accom-

plished so little; and Christ was so enthusiastic over His cause, which was God's cause or God's Kingdom on earth, that He willingly died for it on the Cross of Calvary.

75

SIX CHRISTMASES

TO the boys and girls of the United States Christmas means one of six things, according to their condition in life.

1. There are those who did not know that Christmas was coming, and who do not know anything about Christmas. They never heard of Christ, so how could they know about His birthday? There are not many of these, but even if there were only one, that would be one too many; and each year there are less than there were the year before.

2. There are those who are hearing about it for the first time this year. Sunday School missionaries have gone far away from the railroad to gather the children of some backwoods settlement to a Christmas party. The children have no idea what kind of a party that is, but they go just the same. The missionary plays games with them, and distributes oranges and candy. (Most of them throw the oranges away after the first bite, because they have not peeled the fruit, which they never

saw before.) Then he closes by telling them the story of Jesus' birth in the manger, and of the shepherds and the wise men.

3. There are children living in portions of the large cities who know much concerning Christmas, and who have seen the wonderful things in the shop windows. But, alas, those things mean nothing to them. Their rising on the morning of December 25th is no different than on any other morning; there is no tree, there are no stockings filled with gifts. It is just like every other day.

4. Then there are those who were like these city children last year, but this year some church or Sunday School or Mission has filled baskets with candy and nuts and fruits and toys, and left them at these poor homes, and this year when they wake it is going to be the first *Merry* Christmas they have ever known.

5. And there are a few children—oh, a very few—who have so much that they desire all through the year, that there is nothing left to wish for on Christmas; and because every one is so happy they are particularly unhappy. But their unhappiness is not because they already have so much that they do not wish for anything more, but because their abundance has made them selfish. They are unhappy because they have not learned to *give*.

6. You are the last of the six; and what a happy crowd you are on Christmas! But never

forget that Christmas is a time to give. Never let a Christmas pass without doing something for some one who without you would have no Merry Christmas.

76

CHRISTMAS

THERE was stir and excitement in heaven. Not that that was very unusual, because heaven is a busy place, ever full of stir and excitement. Nor was the special reason for stir and excitement at this time particularly unusual; because it was an old one, namely, that God was going to send some one down to earth. This was a daily, yea, an hourly occurrence. In his dream Jacob had seen a ladder reaching from heaven to earth, on which angels were descending and ascending; and that ladder has never been taken away; it is still there. But this time it was not an angel who was going down to earth; it was God's own Son. It was this that caused the special stir and excitement. The angels could talk of nothing else, especially as just after the Son was to go down, some angels were also to descend and announce to some on earth that He had arrived.

They talked the matter over among themselves, especially with curiosity. If they had been human, their curiosity would have been over which angels

the Father would bless with this the greatest message He had ever sent to men; but, as they were angels, their curiosity was as to who should receive this message; who would be so honoured and blessed. Some of them thought that undoubtedly Herod would be told, because the Son was going into the land over which this man had control. Others thought that Cæsar Augustus would be told, because he was the Roman Emperor and Bethlehem was in his domain. Others had other suggestions; but when the day finally came the instructions were that the angels should make the announcement to some humble shepherds not far from Jerusalem. And so it is that to-day we read:

“ And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

“ And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the

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Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger."

These shepherds were men who were faithfully doing their duty, humbly seeking the best; and to them the angels of God always bring "good tidings of great joy."

Again, to-day, there is stir and excitement in heaven, but this time a multitude of angels that no man can number are coming down all through what we call the Christmas season. As of old, they do not come to all, but only to those who are faithful doers of their daily tasks; who are humbly seeking the best, and who when they have heard the angel will say as did the shepherds of old, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see" the Christ.

77

"NO ROOM"

THE accounts of the birth of Jesus as given to the world by St. Matthew and St. Luke are the best known stories in the world. We read and sing and tell them over again each December, till in Christian lands we are all thoroughly familiar with the Shepherds, the Wise Men, the Star and the Manger. We know where Bethlehem is, and we know that Jesus was born in a stable of that suburb of Jerusalem. He was born in a manger "because

there was no room in the inn.” As we should say, the hotel was full. Hosts of people were in this city of David, all for the same reason, and the later arrivals found “no room in the inn.” Of course there would have been room if the occupants had known who Mary and Joseph were, and that Jesus was going to be born. And any of them would have said, “You may have my room; I can find a place somewhere, perhaps out in the stable.” But no one knew how famous that place was to become; and so He was born in a manger, “because there was no room in the inn.”

Christmas has come around again, and we do not hear much about “no room” to-day. Did you ever hear of any one who refused another gift because there was “no room”? However many presents might be received, there would always be found a place for one more. Or whoever said, “We would like to have a Christmas tree, but we have no room.” The house might be very small, but still a tree could be found small enough to allow of its being admitted to add its grace and sparkle to the occasion. Or whoever said at Christmas that they had no room for any more happiness. No one was ever so happy that he could not be a little happier; for our capacity for happiness is unlimited.

On the other hand there are a few things that we sometimes find it difficult to find more room for. One of these is “thanks.” We all know that

writing thank-you letters is not the pleasantest task in the world. The most disagreeable feature of them is the number we have to write and the difficulty of making each one different. Nevertheless, all of them should be written; not one left out. Never say, "I have no more room—that is, no more time—to say 'thank you.'"

Have we room, or "no room" for Christ? We have room for gifts and tree and happiness and Santa Claus; have we room for Christ? As we can not see Him it is rather hard to say just what we mean when we ask this question: "Is there room for Christ in my Christmas?" The easiest way to describe it is to say that kindness and patience and gentleness, courage and strength and honesty are all parts of Christ, and every time we let a little more of those beautiful virtues into our lives we are letting Christ in, we are making room for Him. But if we grow impatient and cross, unkindly and harsh, weak and dishonest, we are saying just as plainly as you can read it in the second chapter of Luke's Gospel that there is "no room" for Christ in us. One of the finest of our Christmas hymns ends its verses with these two lines:

*"Oh, come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
There is room in my heart for Thee."*

78

KEEPING CHRISTMAS

A FEW years ago an advertisement in an English magazine had this head line: "What is the difference between Christmas and Rain?" The answer was that Christmas came only one day in the year, while Rain came nearly every day (which it does on the British Isles). Consequently, the advertisement continued, buy rain-coats for Christmas gifts.

Well, it is not always necessary to obey (or to believe) what you read in an advertisement (and it is always well to think twice before you answer one by mail). And it is not necessary to buy rain-coats for all your friends. Nevertheless, under the advertisement lies a sensible piece of advice. A raincoat does make a good gift because it will last a whole year or more. Candy is a good gift, and so is fruit and anything good to eat; but they will not last long. A calendar is a better gift, because it will last twelve whole months. A potted plant is better than a bunch of flowers, because it will keep alive longer.

In other words, what lasts the longest is usually worth the most. A man is worth more than a dog or a horse, and one reason is because he lives longer. Furthermore, anything that you can keep is nicer than something that is only loaned to you.

And in the same way Christmas is the nicest holiday, and not least because we *keep* Christmas. For all that Christmas stands for is not just for one day. The first Christmas was not limited to the one day when the shepherds saw the Babe in the manger. Christ grew and lived and taught and died, and has been living and exerting an influence ever since. In the same way what Christmas reminds us of should be kept; it should stay with us and grow. So should the happiness and the cheer of the season not depart by December 26th. There is little value in being happy and in making others happy on one day if you stop the next day. If you *keep* Christmas you will find it easier to be cheerful and thoughtful of others on the days after Christmas.

You expect to keep your Christmas gifts; you are not going to return them after Christmas to those who gave them. So should you keep the Christian spirit, which is the Christ spirit.

79

FINDING CHRIST

THE three Wise Men, or Magi, are familiar persons connected with the great story of the Birth of Christ in the Manger of Bethlehem. They were led by the Star which they had seen in the East, and which they followed till it brought them

to Jerusalem. Herod heard of their arrival and sent for them. After conversing with them he told them to go out and search diligently till they found the Child. Again they set forth, and still led by the Star, they found Him in Bethlehem; and to Him they presented their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Yes, they found the Christ at that first Christmas time. Are we going to find Him at this Christmas time? There will be no Star in the skies to lead us to a real, live baby; but there will be a spirit within us that will lead us to Him.

Wherever there is a poor or unhappy boy or girl, to whom Christmas is going to bring no cheer, there the Christmas spirit will lead us, if we will but follow its guidance, bringing, like the Wise Men, our gifts of toys, and candy and fruit. And wherever we make another happy we have found the Christ as surely as the Wise Men found Him. For "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Once upon a time a boy received a sled for Christmas, a bright, new sled, gaily painted and with smooth runners. How he did enjoy using it most of that day. Late in the afternoon a poor boy, to whom Christmas had brought nothing as fine as a sled, asked if he might have one coast down the hill on it. But the owner of the sled curtly replied, "No," adding to himself that it might get scratched or broken, or the boy might

run off with it and not return it. Those reasons, however, did not really amount to anything, because they were not so much reasons as excuses, and excuses are always flimsy things. The real truth was that the owner of the sled had not found the Christ on His birthday.

Once upon another time a girl received from her mother just what she wanted. She had hoped, but had not expected to receive it, so she was exuberantly happy; nor did she forget to thank her mother repeatedly and effusively. Well, Christmas Day wore on; and after supper mother asked her daughter to help her wash the dishes; but the daughter claimed that she was too tired, and mother (who was also tired) had to do them alone. The girl may have enjoyed Christmas, but very evidently she had not found the Christ.

80

THE WISE MEN

NO one knows much about the Wise Men who came from the East to see Jesus when He was born in the Manger of Bethlehem. They were led by the Star, and when they found Him, "They fell down and worshipped him, and they presented unto him gifts." Sometimes they are called "Kings," as in a familiar carol, "We Three Kings

of Orient Are; ” and they are called Wise Men because they did a great deal of studying in order to learn the most important things in the world.

Who are the wise men of Christmas to-day? Not necessarily the best students, though it is excellent to wish to learn. The Wise Men are now and always those who worship Christ and offer gifts to Him.

When a girl receives a doll for Christmas and will let another girl hold it and play with it for a while, she is wise, fully as wise as the Magi of old. The boy who rose early on Christmas and who therefore had a long, though happy day to live through, is most easily inclined to be tired before the day is over. When one becomes tired, one finds it very easy to become cross. The boy who holds his crossness in, and refuses to be harsh and disagreeable on Christmas is as wise as the Magi of old. Furthermore, if he is so successfully wise on Christmas Day, he will find it easier to keep pleasant and agreeable on the days after Christmas.

Mother is wise if she insists that you go to bed earlier than usual on Christmas night. It has been a longer and more exciting day than usual, and it is mere common sense to do so. The child who acquiesces in mother's orders, much as he or she may prefer to stay up to the usual bedtime hour, is every bit as wise as the Magi of old, and has offered gifts to the Christ-child which are of even

greater value than the myrrh, frankincense and gold.

Above all in wisdom is the one who remembers that Christmas is not merely a most merry day but is also Christ's birthday, and who remembers that Christ came into the world to make people better, and who therefore will not even wait till New Year's Day to make good resolutions, but determines on Christmas itself henceforth to be a finer and nobler boy or girl. That one is the wisest of all the wise, and has offered Christ the gifts that He is happiest in receiving.

81

THREE FEARS

THERE are several ways of accounting for the name of Indian Summer which is given to that warm period in the Fall that follows the first cold spell. One is that the warm weather brought out the Indians, who when the cold weather arrived went to their homes for the winter. As there was snow to reveal their footprints and no leaves to hide them from view, they did practically no marauding or attacking in the winter. But during what we call Indian Summer they came out again for a few weeks. It was only during the few months of the winter that America's early settlers

did not have to live in constant fear of Indian attack.

Another fear that beset the early Americans was that of witches. Whenever a cow ceased to give milk, or a stewing pot boiled over, or something mysteriously disappeared (as things often do), or anything in fact happened that was somewhat hard to understand, it was promptly seized upon as an act of a witch, who was generally an old and perhaps slightly eccentric woman, but who was also as innocent of any blame as you would have been had you been living in New England during the latter half of the seventeenth century. Curiously, however, some of the most intelligent and wisest men of that day believed in witches, and lived in constant fear of them, almost in the same way that they feared the Indians.

Fortunate it is that the Indian can no longer molest and that the belief in witches no longer exists. Among other people, however, who have not advanced in knowledge and in common sense as we have, a fear exists just as strong as these other two; and there is only one thing that can overcome it, and that is the Christian religion. Their own religions, which are oftenest but worthless and harmful superstitions, are of no avail against it; in fact, they keep it alive, as Christianity destroys it. It is the fear born of a firm belief that evil spirits dominate everything, and are everywhere. We have already seen how they were to be

the cause of all sickness. They were also the cause of any and all things disagreeable, and this belief makes millions of people live in constant fear of terrible things.

Were you ever afraid, and had to spend several hours, or perhaps a whole day, fearing and dreading some calamity? Of course you were. It may have been a fear of punishment, or the dread of the dentist chair, or the suspicion that you did not pass your examination in school. Whatever the cause, you know what a miserable feeling it was that hung over and sank down upon you like a heavy weight, or a thick, black cloud. Now imagine, if you can, living like that all of the time! And yet that is just what millions of people have to do, and will have to do as long as they live, unless Christianity is brought to them. To send Christianity to them is called the work of Foreign Missions.

82

BATS

MOST people are afraid of bats. That is partly because of their faces, which, though small, are indeed very ugly and very fierce looking. And it is partly due to the nearly universal belief that they are very anxious to get into one's hair, and that if one does so, and gets entangled there with teeth and claws and wings, it will be a

very difficult thing to get it out; in fact, you would have to cut off almost all your hair in order to be rid of it. That would indeed be a most undesirable experience if that were what bats were inclined to do. But they are not, and never have been so inclined. No one knows quite how the story started, but once having started it is a very hard story to stop. Think a minute—did you ever know of any one who had a bat light in her hair? Ask you parents and your grandparents if they ever knew or heard of any one who had had this experience. They will all answer, “No, I never did.” A bat may be homely, but he never bothers people. In fact, he is very good to them, for he loves to eat mosquitoes; and anything that will eat mosquitoes has our thanks, and our permission to be just as homely as it wishes.

But, to go back to the story that we always thought was true, what do you do when you see a bat? You do one of two things: either you cover your head all up, or you go indoors. Whichever you do, now you feel safe.

In some other countries of the world such as parts of Africa, men believe in worse things than bats. They believe in evil spirits, which are as bad as or worse than the witches in which the New England people of long ago used to believe. Both of these are worse than what most people believe about bats because there is no escape from them, and because they can not be seen. (What you can

not see is always more frightening than what you can see. That is why we are more afraid in the dark than in the light.) If a cow runs away, if a child trips and falls, if the water boils over and puts out the fire,—in short, when anything undesirable happens, it is always thought of as being due to an evil spirit.

All their life long such people live in constant dread of these evil spirits, which are much worse than bats are believed to be, and which are also so much more numerous. And since they can not be seen it is almost impossible to be rid of them. Perhaps Christianity does nothing more beautiful in the world than to send foreign missionaries to teach such people that this belief in evil spirits is as wrong as the current belief about bats, and so it deprives them of their terrible fear.

83

AFTER THE TYPHOON

ALL good Christian people contribute toward the support of Foreign Missions. They do this because they wish other men to know Christ as they know Him, and to become Christians as they are Christians. Occasionally they ask themselves why the people of other lands can not support their own missionary work, just as the Christians of America support their own Home Mis-

sionaries, and ask no other nation to help them. There are several answers to this question, the chief of which are that there are not as many Christians in the lands where we have sent Foreign Missionaries as there are in our own land, and that most of that small number are very poor. Nevertheless, despite those two facts, they do give, and give liberally. The average gift of American Christians is \$5.46, and the average gift of the 17,200 Christians and near-Christians in the province of Chairyung, Korea, is a little over \$6.

In the Fall of 1923 a typhoon struck this province, doing a great amount of damage. Over two hundred houses were destroyed, and one of the churches was badly hurt. It was comparatively new, and there was still a heavy debt upon it. All of the members suffered loss, many of them losing nearly all that they possessed. The next Sunday they came together to worship, and to take up a collection for the special needs resulting from the typhoon. The collection was a large one, so large in fact that our American collection plates or baskets would have been most inadequate for the purpose. This was not because bushels of coins and bills poured in, but because the people, who had so little actual money, gave whatever they could; and when the collection had been all taken and brought up to the front of the church, here is a partial list of what the minister saw on the pulpit platform:

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A jar of pickles (which is "more than gold to the Korean's mind, sweeter even than honey and the honeycomb, better than all Heinz's 57 varieties combined");

A sauce made out of moulded bean curd (and whose odour resembles that of Limburger cheese);

Yards and yards of the narrow, coarse cloth that the Koreans use so much, because it is home-made and they wish to patronize only native industries;

A few yards of more costly silk;

Made-up garments, both new and second hand;
and

A filmy blue skirt, with a red over-skirt and a pink jacket, which was the cherished wedding costume of a young widow, who would have given this away to no one except the church.

This is only a very incomplete list of what was offered in that day of need, and many of the gifts represented sacrifices undoubtedly greater than any we have ever made. Is it not worth our while to help people who are so anxious to help themselves?

84

KING COBRA

A NUMBER of years ago a new mission hospital was being built in Siam, and one day during its erection a snake, a king cobra, thirteen feet long, slowly wound its way out of the neigh-

bouring bushes and crawled into the hospital grounds. It stopped in front of the unfinished hospital, lifted its head, spread out its hood, and swayed to and fro in a way that all cobras do. Although the cobras are rather sluggish, their bite is fatal, and because they are sluggish they are often stepped on unawares by people. Naturally they resent this, and turn and bite the person, who usually dies in a short time, perhaps in less than ten minutes. Knowing how many people are killed each year by them, it was only natural that the carpenters should attack the one who came and gave evidence of examining the hospital.

The people were enraged, and declared that some dreadful ill would come to the carpenters, for they look on this snake with the greatest of reverence. Even though it is so venomous, and 5,000 people in India alone, where it also abounds, are killed each year by its bite, they will do nothing to molest it. In other words they regard it as sacred, and their reason for doing so is found in a story told of Buddha, the founder of their religion.

According to this tale, Buddha fell asleep on the ground one day, and a cobra seeing him and realizing the danger due to the extremely hot sun, came and spread his hood over the face of the sleeping saint. When Buddha awoke he both thanked the snake for its kindness and blessed him. So that to this day all Buddhists and Hindus reverence the cobra. Therefore it is not at all surprising that

they predicted dire calamity to the carpenters who not only killed this one, but who also cooked it and ate it for dinner.

A few days later the mate of the slain cobra also appeared, and she too would have been killed had not the natives violently protested. While they were protesting the cobra escaped.

Another few days later a whirlwind, which is common in Siam, arose, and in its short but violent fury blew off the roof of the uncompleted hospital. The natives all cried out, "See! What did we tell you! You should not have killed the cobra. It has returned to wreak vengeance on your deed." They believed what they said, but the carpenters knew that the dead cobra had nothing to do with the whirlwind; and the authorities in charge of the hospital were really glad that the roof had been blown off because it had not been built very well and should have been done over again.

One difference—and what a colossal difference it is!—between Siam and the United States is that in Siam they worship a cobra and in the United States we worship Jesus Christ. If we really and truly worship Him we will also do all that we can to send the message of Christ to the ignorant people of Siam and of all heathen countries.

85

TWO DOCTORS¹

WHEN you are sick and the doctor comes to see you, he is very gentle and friendly. He generally commences by learning from your mother just what your trouble is and what the symptoms are. He is inclined to place his fingers on your wrist in order to take your pulse, which tells him how fast or slow, strong or weak is that pump called the heart. He also places a thermometer in your mouth to see if you have a temperature. He may look at your tongue because that will tell him about your digestion. Then he looks at your throat, or into your ear, or he tests your heart or your lungs, according to where your particular trouble is located.

In all that he does two things stand out conspicuously. One is his gentleness; he never hurts you—at least not much. If he wishes to examine your blood he pricks your finger or your ear, but it is such a tiny prick that the pain does not amount to anything. When real pain might accompany what he wishes to do, he will either use something to deaden it, or he puts you to sleep. The other noticeable feature of his work is that all the time he is trying to find out exactly

¹ This may be made more effective by being acted out in the Sunday School.

and without any mistake or guesswork, what is the matter with you. This is called diagnosis, and is the most important part of a doctor's task. Only when he has rightly diagnosed your case, can he apply the proper treatment to cure you.

In other lands the doctors are not always the gentle and wise experts that they are in our own. Many people have no other to call in than a witch doctor. He does not pretend to know anything about medicine or surgery or other science. In his opinion there is only one cause of all sickness, and that is an evil spirit that has entered into the body. And there are two chief ways of getting that spirit out. In one case the belief is that he is in and can not get out, though he wants to; and often in this case a long pin, somewhat like a hat pin, is drawn into some soft, fleshy part of the body, and out of this the evil spirit escapes. If, however, the patient is no better the following day, the assumption is that the spirit did not get out, and therefore another puncture must be made. But whether one or two holes are made, the cure is neither pleasant nor efficacious.

The other method employed is either used by itself or accompanies the other one. It consists of making all the noise that is possible, and is usually obtained through employing a number of people to beat with metal rods on such things as tin wash boilers. The purpose is to drive out the evil spirit who can not endure such a racket. We can not

blame the spirit for wishing to escape such a din; but how about the patient? In our country we advocate quiet because a sick man needs it. In heathen lands the noise undoubtedly makes the patient worse.

There is no man who is more of a blessing to men, women and children than the Christian doctor who goes to heathen lands and substitutes for painful and worthless methods of cure, the gentle and efficient methods of the West. He is called a medical missionary, and he goes in the name of Jesus Christ.

86

KOREA

KOREA is the old name of a land that is now the Province of Chosen, Japan. It is like a thumb pointed from the hand of China to Japan, and dividing the Yellow Sea from the Sea of Japan. It is a land of customs that are curious to us, and that do not exist where the people are Christians. Here are two sad and curious customs of that land.

When a boy has his first birthday, he is given a party. That is common everywhere, but this party is different from the party that you had when you were one year old. The little boy is set before a table on which are placed three articles, a coin, a tiny sword and a book. Around him stand his

parents and relatives, to whom he undoubtedly gurgles a few unintelligible "Da-das." Then, as all children would do, he reaches out his hand toward one of the articles. The parents watch breathlessly to see which one he will pick up. In their belief, if he seizes the sword he is destined to be a great warrior; if he is attracted by the money he will be a rich man; and if he pulls at the book he will become a great scholar. And all the future training of the child is determined by which of these first appeals to him on his first birthday.

The other custom is a wedding. It is as important an event in Korea as it is in America, and numberless friends of both the bride and the groom assemble for the occasion. Arrived at the house the men are all in one room, and the women in another. All are gay and talkative, except the bride, who not only has to sit quietly and silently, but has strips of paper to hold her eyes closed. When the time comes for the wedding ceremony she is led into a room which contains a table. The bride stands on one side of it and the groom on the other. They bow to each other three times across the table, in the center of which is the sacred goose. It may be a live goose, or a stuffed goose, or even a wooden goose hired for the occasion. Whichever it is, it plays as important a part at a Korean wedding as the minister does at a Christian wedding.

Next each takes a sip from a little brass wine cup, which is provided by the person who arranged

the marriage; for the young people themselves (and the bride is about twelve years old) have nothing to do in determining whom they shall marry. In fact the girl has never seen her future husband, and not until this brief ceremony is over and the strips are taken from her eyes, does she even know what he looks like.

These are only two of the curious and foolish customs of the un-Christian Koreans. Every piece of money that is put in the collection plate at church and Sunday school for Foreign Missions, goes to help break up such customs, and to institute the Christian customs that are so much wiser and that make for the greater happiness of men, women and children.

87

THE UNITED STATES

THERE are forty-eight stars in the American flag of to-day, a star for every state, as every Boy Scout knows (and let us hope, all other boys and girls know too). These forty-eight states vary in size, shape and location, and make our country's map resemble a most irregular checker board. From the standpoint of Christian Missions it would be easily possible to re-draw the country, and divide it roughly into a smaller number of divisions, each of which would represent a set of

people who are desperately in need of Christianity. This, with Christian work among our possessions of Alaska, Porto Rico, Guam and the Philippines, is known as Home or National Missions, as distinct from Foreign Missions which brings Christianity to people of other lands than our own. Some of these divisions would be as follows:

On the shores of the ocean, especially of the Atlantic, there are to be found large numbers of sailors, whose lives are wild, free and careless, and who have, many of them, forgotten the Christianity they learned as children. They become particularly careless when they are ashore, and various rest rooms, entertainment houses and churches have been built to help keep them straight while they are off duty.

Also on the coast, as well as elsewhere, there are the large cities, into which pour every year hundreds of families who have emigrated from foreign countries. They usually arrive here knowing little or no English, and are very poor. They can not afford churches of their own; and part of the Home Missionary work of American Christians is to help them continue the worship of God that they were accustomed to at home, by aiding them in building churches for themselves and Sunday Schools for their children.

Going south we find a large and rather compact division where, in many areas, the negroes outnumber the whites. Toward the southwest

there are many Indians; and as we travel west and northwest we find numbers of Chinese and Japanese who live close to the Pacific Ocean. In the northwest and extending almost across the whole northern boundary of the country, there are many lumber-jacks, men who live in camps far back from cities and villages who are engaged in bringing to us the wood that is so necessary in such countless ways. And a little east of the center of the country there are thousands of mountaineers, who live far back from sight and sound of the railroad, and who need both education and religion.

To all of these the Home Missionaries go, now as teachers and now as doctors, some to found Sunday Schools and some to open churches. And one and all are engaged in the great double task of Americanizing and of Christianizing the whole country in which we live and which we love.

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BIRTHDAYS

TO-DAY is this church's birthday. That means that it is so many years old, that it was started so many years ago to-day.

You know what a birthday is, and you enjoy your own so much that you wish it might come more than once a year; but of course that a birthday can never do. You also enjoy the birthdays

of the other members of the family. It is always a happy day.

On your own birthday you expect something. In "the best regulated families" gifts are given; and a birthday becomes a small-sized Christmas; except that it is for one person and not for all. You also expect a cake with candles, a candle for each year, and sometimes with an extra one added "to grow on." You also expect the same number of kisses from father and mother, and slaps from your friends at school. You also receive congratulations and best wishes for "Many Happy Returns of the Day."

So, as we said, the church has a birthday—it is having one to-day. But she receives no cake and candles, and no gifts; and only a few people think to congratulate her on having lived so long and so successfully.

When you receive your gifts and your congratulations, you thank those who give them; and the church wants to thank you to-day, for your congratulations, and in recognition of the fact that she would not be alive to-day at all if it were not for you, and there is one thing a church can do; it can talk. It has a tongue, and the minister of the church is the tongue. When he speaks he is speaking for the church.

Therefore, the church is saying to you: "I thank you that to-day is my birthday. Without you where would I be? And even if I were here to-day,

where would I be to-morrow without you, the children? If you wish me Many Happy Returns of the Day, it is you who must make that wish come true, by supporting and loving me as well in the next year as you have done the last year."

That is what the church says to you to-day on her birthday.

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